

March 21, 2017

Representative Stephen Huffman
Chair
Health Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives

Representative Nickie Antonio
Ranking Member
Health Committee
The Ohio House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the House Health Committee,

I write on behalf of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Central Ohio, Northeast Ohio, and Southwest Ohio Chapters to express support for House Bill 72, *Adopt requirements for step therapy protocols*. Over 30% of the Foundation's patient constituents are subject to step therapy and many find it difficult to work through the insurance process to attain coverage for the treatments they need. In these cases, patients experience a delay in treatment which can exacerbate their disease and lead to invasive and avoidable surgeries. We urge the Committee to pass HB 72.

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation is the leading organization advocating for the 1.6 million Americans affected by Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, collectively known as inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD). IBD are painful, medically incurable, debilitating illnesses that affect the digestive system. It is common for IBD patients to require surgery at least once in their life to remove part of their gastrointestinal tract. Many patients rely on costly biologics to achieve remission and avoid damage and subsequent surgeries. In some cases when patients have been unable to appeal a step therapy protocol, they have required invasive and avoidable surgery, including the loss of entire organs. Treatment is highly individualized for each patient and it is critical that patients have access to the right medication at the right time.

HB 72, *Adopt requirements for step therapy protocols*, would minimize barriers to patient access to the right treatment by improving the step therapy process. Step therapy is a process by which an insurer requires patients to fail first on an insurer-preferred medication before providing coverage for the physician-prescribed medication. HB 72 would ensure that step therapy protocols are aligned with medical thinking, provide patients and physicians with access to a timely and transparent appeals process, and establish circumstances in which a patient can be exempted from the step therapy process. This bill is designed to strengthen the patient-physician decision making relationship, and would significantly help those patients that would experience worsened health outcomes with any delay in access to the right treatment.

We hope the Committee will pass HB 72 and we appreciate your consideration of this bill. The membership of the Foundation includes world experts in the treatment of IBD as well as patients who have been affected by step therapy. For additional information, or if you would



like to speak with our experts and patients, please contact Sarah Buchanan, the Foundation's Director of Advocacy, at sbuchanan@crohnscolitisfoundation.org or 646-531-6162.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Steele
Area Executive Director
Southwest Ohio Chapter
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation