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April 9, 2018

The Honorable Representative Stephen A. Huffman  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Support HB 72

Dear Chair Huffman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Academy of Integrative Pain Management (formerly American Academy of Pain Management), a member of the 60-member coalition representing thousands of providers and patients throughout Ohio, we urge you to support HB 72, an act improving the use of step therapy protocols by health insurers.

Passage of this bi-partisan legislation would require that insurers base their step therapy protocols on widely-accepted clinical guidelines so that quality care—not merely cost—dictate requirements. Further, the bill would require that the exceptions process for step therapy protocols is transparent and accessible to patients and their health care providers. Of vital importance, this legislation would require an insurer to make a step therapy exception determination within 72 hours of receipt of the request or within 24 hours in emergency situations. Further, HB 72 does **not** prohibit insurers from using step therapy and it does **not** require insurers to cover any specific medication. It seeks to improve the step therapy process by balancing cost containment with common sense patient needs.

All too often, the utilization of step therapy forces patients with serious and degenerative medical conditions to undergo an indefinite, painful, and often dangerous, process of trial and error before finally receiving the treatment originally recommended by their health care provider. In some cases, the process can cause patients' medical conditions to deteriorate, increasing the need for more expensive and invasive medical treatment in the future. What's more, patients' untreated conditions can increase the incidence of depression, non-compliance, and self-medication. Further, the step therapy process can increase the direct cost of health care due to increased hospital admissions and excessive use of emergency rooms. Indirect costs can include lost wages and productivity of both healthcare consumers and their caregivers.

**Passage of HB 72 will help to ensure that patients are able to receive the optimal medication for their particular situation, as determined by their health care provider, and would result in an overall financial savings to the patient and the healthcare system.**

AIPM respectfully urges you to sign this bill into law, joining the list of 16 states and growing that have already enacted similar legislation in recent years, including Indiana, West Virginia, Iowa, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas.

I am happy to discuss this issue with you or your staff if necessary. Please feel free to contact me by email at [kduensing@aapainmanage.org](mailto:kduensing@aapainmanage.org), or by telephone at 209-425-0468.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Duensing".

Katie Duensing, J.D.  
Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs  
Academy of Integrative Pain Management

About AIPM: The Academy of Integrative Pain Management is the premier organization for all clinicians who care for people with pain. It is the largest pain management organization in the nation and the only one that embraces, as part of its mission statement, an integrative model of care, which: is patient-centered; considers the whole person; encourages healthful lifestyle changes as part of the first line of treatment to restore wellness; is evidence-based; brings together all appropriate therapeutic approaches to reduce pain and achieve optimal health and healing; and, encourages a team approach.