

House Health Committee

Proponent Testimony

HB 72

April 11, 2018

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 72, Step Therapy Reform legislation aimed at implementing guidelines and fair protocols for both private and public health plans. On behalf of the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition (MHAC), one of the 60-members that have joined together representing thousands of providers and patients throughout Ohio, we urge you to support House Bill 72. The MHAC is made up of over 100 organizations that provide behavioral health care treatment services as well as many others that serve those whose lives intersect with behavioral health such as hospitals, courts, and consumer advocacy groups.

HB72 improves step therapy protocols by allowing exemptions from the step therapy process in certain cases. Our members have expressed concern with step therapy protocols because clients with mental health disorders need the right medication at the right time. The bipartisan legislation will provide clients timely access to medications they need and acknowledges the physician's clinical judgment as well as the patient's personal medical history.

HB72 does not eliminate the step therapy process, does not require insurers from using step therapy, and it does not require insurers to cover any specific medication. Rather, the bill requires health insurance plans to provide access to a clear, easily accessible, and convenient process to request a step therapy exemption. The bill requires health plans to list which drugs have an attached step therapy protocol before coverage is provided for the medication chosen by the health care provider. The health insurance plan must also indicate what information or documentation must be provided for a step therapy exemption. This will be helpful for our mental health treatment providers to identify those medications and request an exemption for clients they feel are in need of the medicine they determine to be the most beneficial to prescribe.

The following reasons grant a step therapy exemption:

- The required prescription drug is contraindicated or will likely cause an adverse reaction;
- The required prescription drug is expected to be ineffective based on the known relevant clinical characteristics of the patient and the known characteristics of the prescription drug regimen, and the health care provider documents the specific reason for the step therapy exemption in the patient's medical record.
- The patient has tried the required prescription drug while under their current, or a previous, health benefit plan, or another prescription drug in the same pharmacologic class or with the

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same mechanism of action, and such prescription drug was discontinued due to lack of efficacy or effectiveness, diminished effect, or an adverse event.

- The required prescription drug is not in the best interest of the patient, based on medical necessity, and the health care provider documents the specific reason for the step therapy exemption in the patient's medical record.
- The patient is stable on a prescription drug selected by the patient's health care provider for the medical condition under consideration, regardless of whether or not the drug was prescribed when the patient was covered under the current or a previous health benefit plan. However, a health benefit plan may require a stable patient to try an AB-rated generic equivalent prior to providing coverage for the branded drug.

Behavioral health treatment providers spend time talking with and counseling clients, learning about their lives as well as other health matters that need to be considered when determining the best prescription to treat mental health disorders. The treatment process should exist only between the patient and physician. The Step Therapy Reform bill will lead to better health outcomes and patient care which is critical for mental wellness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 72.

Sincerely,



Kelly Smith
State Program & Policy Director
Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition