



**Board of Directors**

April 4, 2018

Dr. Otha Gilyard  
*Columbus*

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

Cheryl Boyce  
*Columbus*

Honorable Barbara H. Boyd  
*Cleveland*

**Re: HB72 – Improves step therapy**

Dr. Yung Chen Lu, Ph.D.  
*Columbus*

Dear Chairman Huffman and Members of the Health Committee:

Dr. Cora Munoz, Ph.D., RN  
*Columbus*

On behalf of Ohio Federation for Health Equity and Social Justice, a member of the 60-member coalition representing thousands of providers and patients throughout Ohio, **we urge you to support House Bill 72.**

Helen Jones-Kelley, JD  
*Dayton*

The bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Representatives Terry Johnson and Nicki Antonio, will provide patients timely access to the medications they need. Members of our coalition have testified at bill hearings, advocacy days, and individual meetings with legislators over the past two years on the adverse impact that step therapy/fail first requirements have caused our patients.

Victor L. Leandry, LSW, MSW  
*Lorain*

Theresa Wukusick, MS  
*Vermilion*

**HB72** improves step therapy protocols, a one-size-fits-all utilization management tool used by health insurance plans, which require patients to try and fail one or more prescription drugs before coverage is provided for the medication chosen by the patient's health care provider.

Doni Miller, JD  
*Toledo*

We understand the need to contain health care costs, but we are concerned because step therapy algorithm requirements do not take into account the physician's clinical judgement as well as the patient's personal medical history.

V. Lanna Samaniego  
*Celina*

**President & CEO**

Ronald R. Browder

**HB72** 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.

**HB72** would ensure that step therapy decisions are based on clinical practice guidelines or medical or scientific evidence. It would require insurers to have a clear, convenient process for physicians to pursue a step therapy exemption. The bill also specifies the conditions under which it is medically appropriate to exempt patients from step therapy.

Excluding physicians' clinical judgment from patients' treatment plans creates a barrier to getting the right care at the right time. Step therapy can undermine physicians' ability to effectively treat patients and lower quality of care, resulting in set-backs and disease progression for patients.



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The Ohio Federation for Health Equity and Social Justice is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of Ohio and is principally made up of agencies, organizations and individuals concerned about minority and multicultural health, health equity, social justice and the elimination of health disparities for racial/ethnic populations. The Federation serves as a mechanism to develop and implement unified and innovative approaches to influence and shape policies and resources regarding minority health. The Federation's strength is in its ability to work across multiple sectors using unified approaches that encompass but not limited to: community mobilization and civic engagement, development and dissemination of position briefs that are policy and resource focused, capacity building, and development of infrastructure.

The Federation's mission is to create a geographically and racially diverse coalition to address system change through civic engagement, policy and infrastructure development, and funding/resource development.

The Federation has partnered across Ohio with faith communities to address the impact that step therapy has on patients. Whether in Appalachian or urban counties, we have heard from patients that providers need to be able to prescribe the medicine that best suits a patient's condition.

States across the nation are implementing step therapy legislation in recognition that improving health is a partnership between patients, providers and insurance carriers. Ohio would join the growing list of 16 states that have enacted similar step therapy legislation, including Indiana, West Virginia, Iowa, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Texas.

**Ohioans cannot wait any longer to have the patient protections in HB72 and we respectfully urge you to prioritize the passage of this legislation**

We ask that Ohio now join this effort towards better health outcomes.

Thank you in advance for supporting patients throughout Ohio.

Ronald R. Browder  
President & CEO