

Robert A. DeLeo  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
State House – Room 356  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Ronald Mariano  
House Majority Leader  
State House – Room 343  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Aaron Michlewitz  
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House – Room 243  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative John J. Mahoney  
Chairman, Joint Committee on Public Health  
State House – Room 130  
Boston, MA 02133

Jeffrey N. Roy  
Chairman, Joint Committee on Higher Education  
State House – Room 43  
Boston, MA 02133

Speaker DeLeo, Leader Mariano, Chairman Michlewitz, Chairman Mahoney and Chairman Roy:

On behalf of patients across the Commonwealth, we wish to commend the House for your work over the years to ensure access to groundbreaking treatments that help improve the quality of life for those suffering from illness and disease. As you look to wrap up an unprecedented legislative session, we respectfully request that you bring to the floor and vote to approve legislation dealing with “step therapy” insurance practices. Step therapy is a tool insurers use to limit how much they spend covering patients’ medications. Under a step therapy protocol, a patient must try one or more drugs chosen by their insurer—usually based on financial, not medical, considerations—before coverage is granted for the drug prescribed by the patient’s health care provider.

We are not asking you to prohibit the use of step therapy, rather, we seek a policy to balance protecting patients when a step therapy protocol would produce an adverse health outcome, with allowing for the use of step therapy when it is appropriate for controlling costs.

Under step therapy protocols, patients may be required to try one or more alternative prescription drugs that are of lower cost to the insurer but may not be the best therapy for some patients. Patients need the ability to quickly assess their condition with their doctors and find the best course of treatment for their individual medical needs. Delays in access to the best treatment available, which could be experienced as a result of patients having to go through a step therapy protocol, can pose significant risk to the treatment of disease.

Step therapy can undermine physicians’ ability to effectively treat patients, can lower quality of care, and lead to setbacks and disease progression for patients. Exemptions from step therapy do not prohibit insurers from using step therapy but seek to balance cost containment with patient needs.

We appreciate your consideration and are available to discuss any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Aimed Alliance  
Alliance for Patient Access  
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College of Gastroenterology  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Diabetes Association  
Arthritis Foundation  
Chronic Disease Coalition  
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
Epilepsy Foundation New England  
Global Healthy Living Foundation  
Infusion Access Foundation  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
Lupus Foundation New England  
Massachusetts Association for Mental Health  
Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association  
Massachusetts Pain Initiative  
Massachusetts Society of Clinical Oncologists  
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts  
National Infusion Center Association  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Psoriasis Foundation  
New England Bleeding Disorders Advocacy Coalition  
New England Hemophilia Association  
Patients Rising Now  
Susan G. Komen  
US COPD Coalition  
U.S. Pain Foundation  
ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer