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March 10, 2016

Dear Kansas House Health and Human Services Committee,

The Epilepsy Foundation strongly opposes SB 341 allowing step therapy on Medicaid via written testimony. The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the 60,000 people in Kansas who live with epilepsy.

Step therapy requires patients to try and fail on medications before he or she can "step up" to the medication recommended by their healthcare prescriber. This delay in appropriate treatment can lead patients to suffer side effects from inadequate medications and even worsening illness because the most suitable treatment was delayed. Ultimately, step therapy can negatively affect patient care and drive up health care costs due to increased doctor visits and/or hospital visits that could be avoided if patients are not forced to use less effective medications.

Medically appropriate and necessary treatment for people with epilepsy requires access to the full range of medication options available today, including those that work best for the individual to control his or her seizures with minimum side effects, as prescribed by the treating physician. For people with epilepsy, it is crucial that if they are stable on a medication, that they should be allowed to continue on that medication and not have to go through the step therapy process.

The Epilepsy Foundation emphasizes that a seizure can involve severe injury to the individual and to others and the possibility for long-term brain injury. Step therapy or fail first policies cause unnecessary harm by not allowing the consumer access to the most appropriate line of treatment for his/her condition.

Thank you for hearing the bill during the Public Health and Welfare Committee hearing on 3/10/16 and we ask that you please consider an exception to SB 341 by exempting people with epilepsy from the step therapy to improve the lives of those who live with epilepsy in Kansas and increase access to lifesaving medications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darla Templeton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Darla Templeton, CEO

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