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Honorable Chairman Representative Hawkins
Kansas House Health and Human Services:

I am Dr. Joseph Sankoorikal, a pain specialist practicing in Topeka for the last 25 years. I am also the medical director of Kansas Rehabilitation Hospital and outpatient Rehabilitation Medical Director at Saint Francis Hospital.

I am writing this letter to you to express my great concern on the proposed bill regarding step therapy. I am opposed to this Senate bill # 341 due to the following reasons.

We as providers are very cognizant about the escalating costs in medicine. Also, we are very sensitive about the quality of care our patients deserve.

There are claims from insurance companies that step therapy saves money and provide adequate care to patients. In some cases, it is true. On the other hand in many instances, step therapy can delay appropriate care to patients. Patients are supposed to try various other medications as suggested by insurance and not by providers. This can delay the recovery of patients, prolong the pain and suffering of our patients.

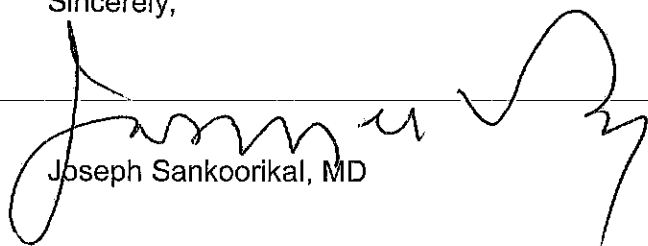
We as providers look at the bigger picture in treating patients. We understand the needs of the patient and try to achieve good control of their pain and suffering with appropriate medications in the shortest possible time. Prolonging the suffering should not be an option under the pretext of saving money.

Patients may have intolerance and allergies to several of these step therapy medications. In that case, patients deserve other appropriate measures other than step therapy.

There are some studies that has shown that step therapy may actually increase the cost in the long run.

Again, let the providers use their education, experience and clinical judgement to prescribe medications than the insurance companies. Thus the patients will get the appropriate and adequate treatment they deserve to minimize the pain, suffering and co-morbidities.

Sincerely,



Joseph Sankoorikal, MD