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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Proponent

SB 82

February 13, 2017

My name is Bob Williams, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine (KAOM). Thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee regarding SB 82 which provides for step therapy protocols.

Physicians are keenly aware of the high cost of prescription medication as well as the ability of their patients to pay for medications. As a result, when appropriate and in the patient's best interest, it is not unusual for a physician to begin medication therapy with the lowest cost drug prior to moving to a more expensive medication. However, increasingly, health insurance plans have imposed restrictions on the prescribing of medication via "step therapy". It often appears to the physician community that step therapy requirements are based on the financial interests of the insurance companies rather than on the best interest of the patient. Physicians have also expressed frustration with the process imposed upon them and their patients by insurance companies when attempting to obtain an override of step therapy requirements. In some cases, the override process requires many time consuming "back and forth" communications between physician, dispenser, patient, and insurance company.

SB 82 requires insurance companies to base their step therapy requirements and protocols on clinical review criteria which are developed and endorsed by a multidisciplinary panel of medical experts. SB 82 also requires the insurance companies to provide physicians with "access to a clear, convenient, and readily accessible process to request an override of the step therapy protocol". While the prescribing of a given drug may appear to an insurance company as unnecessary or too costly, only the physician has a complete diagnostic picture of their patient's health status and history. SB 82 will greatly assist physicians with their ability to provide appropriate drug therapy for their patients.

We encourage the committee to support SB 82.

Thank you.

Senate Public Health and Welfare

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment \_\_\_\_\_