



To: Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
From: Jon Rosell
Executive Director
Date: February 10, 2017
Subject: SB 82 Step Therapy

The Kansas Medical Society appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in support of SB 82, a bill that would provide needed clarity and structure to the use of “step therapy”. In an effort to control health care expenditures, step therapy was enacted to require patients to try and fail on certain prescription medications before permitting the patient to receive the specific medication actually prescribed by their physician. For patients living with serious health conditions or chronic diseases the prolongation of access to effective medication may result in irreversible progression of disease, adverse reactions as well as prolonged suffering, increased emergency room visits and possibly unnecessary hospitalizations. Kansas physicians see these consequences as simply unnecessary barriers from effectively and efficiently treating their patients.

SB 82 establishes a much needed patient-centric framework by which prudent prescribing decisions can be made by Kansas physicians while still recognizing the need to use cost-effective approaches when treating patients. This bill wisely creates and implements step therapy protocols based upon widely-accepted clinical guidelines which will hopefully strike the important balance of timely, effective treatment with the need to deliver care in a cost-effective fashion.

SB 82 also allows for critically important over-ride features that enable knowledgeable providers who are keenly aware of a patient’s history and condition the ability to bypass the health plan’s “fail-first” approach. The bill, however, keeps in place many of the previous elements introduced by the health plans that help manage costly misuses of prescription medications.

In summary, KMS supports SB 82 as a potentially effective tool to, first and foremost, meet the needs of Kansas patients. We are hopeful the bill removes the many unnecessary barriers that have previously delayed or prevented the patient from receiving the most effective medicine for their medical needs in a timely fashion. SB 82 introduces needed clarity and structure that we feel will be in the best interest of Kansas patients and places patient welfare before cost savings that may ultimately result in delayed treatment, prolonged suffering and potentially higher costs to the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective and we respectfully request that you support SB 82.

Senate Public Health and Welfare

Date 2.13.17

Attachment 18