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February 11, 2017

Senator Vicki Schmidt, Chair
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
Kansas Senate
Topeka, Kansas

RE: Support SB 304

Dear Senator Schmidt and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Academy of Integrative Pain Management (formerly American Academy of Pain Management) to support SB 304, an act concerning the use of step therapy protocols by health insurers. Passage of this legislation would require that insurers base their step therapy protocols on widely-accepted clinical guidelines so that quality care—not cost—dictate requirements. Further, the bill would require that the exceptions process for step therapy protocols is transparent and accessible to patients and their health care providers. And lastly, but of vital importance, this legislation would require an insurer to make a step therapy exception determination within 72 hours of receipt of the request or within 24 hours in emergency situations. **Passage of SB 304 will help to ensure that patients are able to receive the optimal medication for their particular situation, as determined by their health care provider, and would result in an overall financial savings to the patient and the healthcare system.**

All too often, the utilization of step therapy forces patients with serious and degenerative medical conditions to undergo an indefinite, painful, and often dangerous, process of trial and error before finally receiving the treatment originally recommended by their health care provider. In some cases, the process can cause patients' medical conditions to deteriorate, increasing the need for more expensive and invasive medical treatment in the future. What's more, patients' untreated conditions can increase the incidence of depression, non-compliance, and self-medication. Further, the step therapy process can increase the direct cost of health care due to increased hospital admissions and excessive use of emergency rooms. Indirect costs can include lost wages and productivity of both healthcare consumers and their caregivers.

AIPM believes that passage of SB 304 will help to ensure that patients are able to receive the optimal medication for their particular situation, as determined by their health care provider, and will also result in an overall financial savings to the patient and the healthcare system. I respectfully urge you to sign this bill into law, and I am happy to discuss this issue with you or your staff if necessary. Please feel free to contact me by email at kduensing@aapainmanage.org, or by telephone at 209-288-2214.

About AIPM: The Academy of Integrative Pain Management is the premier organization for all clinicians who care for people with pain. It is the largest pain management organization in the nation and the only one that embraces, as part of its mission statement, an integrative model of care, which: is patient-centered; considers the whole person; encourages healthful lifestyle changes as part of the first line of treatment to restore wellness; is evidence-based; brings together all appropriate therapeutic approaches to reduce pain and achieve optimal health and healing; and, encourages a team approach.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Duensing".

Katie Duensing, J.D.
Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
Academy of Integrative Pain Management