



NATIONAL
PSORIASIS
FOUNDATION®

Our Mission: To drive efforts to cure psoriatic disease and improve the lives of those affected.

February 25th, 2019

Chairman Suellentrop and members of the Public Health and Welfare Committee,

My name is Angie Thies, the state government relations manager for the National Psoriasis Foundation. The National Psoriasis Foundation represents 8.3 million Americans and roughly 71,331 Kansans living with psoriatic disease. I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 93. This legislation will extend common sense patient protections for the practice of step therapy to all Kansans who utilize the individual market for health insurance.

Step therapy is an insurer practice that makes an individual “step through” a series of medications before they will cover the medication recommended by their physician. Step therapy was designed with the intention of limiting costs, but in reality, the practice often results in increased cost for the health care system and individual due to having to sepr through medications that contraindicated or ineffective.

Step therapy has become increasingly prevalent and detrimental to patients facing chronic, progressive and complex conditions such as psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Our constituents routinely share that being “stepped” results in delays of weeks, months and years before they get the medication that effectively treats their condition. For individuals facing psoriatic disease, these delays jeopardize functionality, long-term mobility and can cause irreversible joint disease.

In 2016, patient protections were put in place for the practice of step therapy for individuals in KanCare, the state’s Medicaid program. The National Psoriasis Foundation joined countless organizations in supporting this effort and urges you to extend these protections so that all Kansans accessing the individual insurance market will have access to the following:

- Decisions that are the result of updated, evidence based and peer reviewed clinical guidelines
- A process to request and receive an exception to step therapy protocol if at least one of the following conditions exist:
 - The required drug is contraindicated or likely to cause harm.
 - The required drug is expected to be ineffective based on the known relevant physical or mental characteristics of the patient and the known characteristics of the drug regimen.
 - The patient has tried the required prescription drug while under their current or a previous health benefit plan, and the doctor submits evidence of failure or intolerance.
 - The patient is currently stable on a prescription drug.
- A clear and timely process to request an exception – 24 hours in exigent circumstances and 72 hours in non-exigent circumstances.

In closing, I urge you to support SB 93. This important legislation will make it possible for all Kansans insured by the individual market to access the same patient protections for the practice of step therapy as are currently found in KanCare.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. I'd be happy to assist with questions or information. Please feel free to reach me at athies@psoriasis.org or by phone at (614) 208-3794.

Angie Thies
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