

Proponent Testimony for HB 2157 - Health and Human Services Committee
Step Therapy Protocols

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience with you today. This summer will be 14 years since I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). Just a few weeks after, I found out I was pregnant with twins. After my children were born, I began a daily injection to try to slow down the progression of MS. This medication has terrible injection site reactions and my arms and legs developed large lumps under the skin. It also is a painful injection lasting 30-45 minutes similar to an insect sting. During that same time, a new medication had just come to market that was showing the highest efficacy rates of any MS treatment. I had to try a second medication before I could be given the new one which was a weekly injection. After switching to this medication, my new MRIs showed that I had tripled the lesions on my brain.

Finally, I was approved for the new medication and that was 8 years ago. I have shown no new lesions and have been stable on this medication since that time. However, a couple of years ago, my insurance company left the marketplace and I was forced to choose a new one. The new insurance company delayed my treatment over new prior authorizations for over 30 days which they knew they would approve when it was received. This medication is needed to keep my disease stable. If I exacerbate, and end up hospitalized or debilitated, it will cost the insurance company much more money. By pushing out my prior authorization 30 days, the insurance company pockets that cost. How much money are they saving if they push out every prior authorization 30 days? Ultimately, this has put my health at risk for the profits of the insurance company without any way to speed up the process.

Step therapy protocols need to be changed. My doctor knows what is best for me, not my insurance company. This is an expensive disease with no known cause or known cure. I am doing as well as I can be because of innovative research in pharmaceuticals. However, the step therapy practices that are currently in place limit the access to these life changing medications.

I am urging you to please support HB 2157 and give patients access to the medications that their doctors know are the best for them from the start of the diagnosis.

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