



May 12, 2020

Louisiana House Committee on Insurance
900 N. 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

Re: Support for HB 263

Chairman Brown and members of the House Committee on Insurance,

Our coalition consists of patient and provider groups that represent individuals whose health and welfare would be directly improved by HB 263. HB 263 would update Louisiana's existing statutes concerning the practice of step therapy. Current pandemic conditions further heighten the necessity of HB 263.

Step therapy is a utilization management practice that requires a patient to "fail first" on one or more medications before receiving coverage for the medication they were originally prescribed. While this process may be appropriate on a broad basis, it may be inappropriate on an individual basis for atypical and complex patients that the organizations in our coalition represent. Successful management of these cases requires a case-by-case approach to care.

As a result, application of step therapy in certain situations can result in detrimental delays in care and other unintended consequences for patients. These effects include irreversible disease progression, loss of function, exacerbation and development of comorbidities, all of which result in higher cost of care than proper upfront management of chronic disease. Further, our patient and provider groups have seen how under-management of chronic conditions can exacerbate the risks that our patients in Louisiana face, especially during this pandemic.

The Louisiana Legislature recognized the need for step therapy reform a decade ago, when it became the first state to place commonsense guardrails on the step therapy process. Louisiana proved to be the vanguard for numerous states that have since followed suit. However, these subsequent laws, and continuing concerns regarding the step therapy process in Louisiana, have brought to light the need for the law to be updated.

HB 263 accomplishes this by adding additional clinically grounded scenarios under which an exception to a step therapy protocol must be granted, refining the existing language, detailing the process and timelines for step therapy exception requests, and creating minimum evidentiary standards for the creation of a step therapy protocol. These reforms will ensure that patients in Louisiana do not unnecessarily face adverse events and delays in proper treatment.

HB 263 is a timely bill that allows for our patients to receive the right medication at the right time, especially in these uncertain times.

On behalf of the undersigned members of our coalition and the patients and providers we represent, we respectfully request your support for HB 263.

Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance for Patient Access
ALS Association of Louisiana-Mississippi
American Academy of Dermatology
American Association of Clinical Urologists
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Society of Clinical Oncology
Arthritis Foundation
Association of Women in Rheumatology
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation
Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians
Louisiana Hemophilia Foundation
Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association
Louisiana Society of Interventional Pain Physicians
Louisiana State Medical Society
Mended Hearts
Multiple Sclerosis Association of America
NAMI Louisiana, National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Hemophilia Foundation
National Infusion Center Association
National Kidney Foundation of Louisiana
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Psoriasis Foundation
Rheumatology Alliance of Louisiana
Rheumatology Nurses Society
Susan G. Komen