



Dear Members of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation:

As representatives of an expansive and diverse group of patients and health care professionals in Louisiana, we are writing to ask your support for federal step therapy reform legislation, to ensure that patients with serious diseases such as cancer, epilepsy and diabetes, as well as kidney transplant recipients and many others, are able to access the right medications at the right time without being forced to try and “fail first” on other medicines they were not prescribed.

The practice of step therapy, commonly referred to as “fail first,” is a utilization management protocol commonly used by health insurers to require patients to try – and fail – medications chosen by the insurance companies before allowing them to access the medicine originally prescribed by their health care provider. This insurance practice undermines a provider’s ability to appropriately treat patients with serious diseases and can greatly impede the patient’s stability and recovery.

The spread of COVID-19 has revealed the dramatic and negative effect of utilization management on the health of patients, including those not infected with the virus. They are facing longer waits for their treatments, as healthcare providers who are experiencing dramatic changes in their operations due to COVID-19 are struggling to navigate the hurdles of utilization management practices like step therapy. The pandemic has pointed to the need to reduce unnecessary barriers on providers and support their ability to provide appropriate and timely care for their patients that could prevent the need for additional and costly medical interventions.

**As you may know, both chambers of the Louisiana Legislature unanimously passed HB 263, now Act 181, earlier this summer to put in place important patient protections on the use of step therapy protocols by health plans and is now one of the strongest measures in the nation to reform the use of step therapy.**

While Louisiana and nearly 30 other states are making great progress in protecting patients, these step therapy laws only apply to patients with state-regulated health plans. That is why we are asking you to support federal legislation to close the gap for Louisianans whose health plans are federally regulated.

Members of the U.S. House and Senate have introduced bipartisan federal step therapy reform legislation. H.R. 2279, the Safe Step Act, was introduced in the House by two physicians, Congressman Brad Wenstrup (R-OH) and Congressman Raul Ruiz (D-CA). The Senate version, S. 2546, is sponsored by Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Doug Jones (D-AL). The House bill currently has 146 cosponsors and the Senate bill has 16 cosponsors, including Sens. Bill Cassidy, MD and John Kennedy.



**We respectfully ask for you to join both Sens. Cassidy and Kennedy and support federal step therapy reform legislation – the Safe Step Act – as a fair and balanced way to put patients and their health care providers back in charge of their health care.**

H.R. 2279 provides a common-sense solution that establishes reasonable reforms and limits on step therapy practices and ensures that a health care provider’s professional judgment and a thorough review of a patient’s history are part of a successful health care equation.

On behalf of our members, including patients, caregivers, physicians and other health care providers, we thank you for your review and consideration of federal step therapy reform legislation and respectfully request your affirmative support, particularly in light of the urgency created by the coronavirus pandemic.

Sincerely,

- Allergy & Asthma Network
- Alliance for Patient Access
- American Academy of Dermatology Association
- American Association of Clinical Urologists
- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
- Association for Clinical Oncology
- Arthritis Foundation
- Association of Women in Rheumatology
- Coalition of Hematology and Oncology Practice Managers
- Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
- Crohn's and Colitis Foundation
- Epilepsy Alliance of Louisiana
- Hemophilia Federation of America
- Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians
- Louisiana Association of Nurse Practitioners
- Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Louisiana Dermatological Society
- 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 Organization for Rare Disorders
- National Psoriasis Foundation
- Pontchartrain Cancer Center
- Rheumatology Alliance of Louisiana
- Rheumatology Nurses Society
- Susan G. Komen
- The Sarcoidosis Awareness Foundation of Louisiana