

October 13, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

It is with great honor that the 66 undersigned organizations congratulate you on your appointment to serve as New York's 57th governor and wish you well in your new role.

For a number of years, a broad range of organizations have united on various health access issues, and together, we represent healthcare providers, various disease states, and social equity interests. What brings us together is a single cause – protecting patients.

It is without doubt that you have taken office in the face of many unprecedented challenges, and we write to you to offer a solution to a longstanding access issue that has burdened so many New Yorkers and in turn, our state's healthcare system.

This year [S.4111 Breslin/A.4668 Peoples-Stokes](#) overwhelmingly passed both the New York State Senate and Assembly with bipartisan support; a loud and unified message underscoring the importance of putting patients first.

Once signed into law, this bill will prohibit non-medical switching – the current health insurance practice of switching stable patients off their current physician-prescribed medications to potentially fewer effective alternatives for non-medical reasons that may result in the loss of efficacy of managing a chronic illness.

For many New Yorkers, particularly those with chronic and complex illnesses, medical stability is hard won. Oftentimes, patients are dependent upon these advanced medical therapies to maintain normal lives. Patients' stability is jeopardized when non-medical switching is used and they are forced to abandon the effective therapy for a less costly alternative – for reasons unrelated to the patient's well-being. Significant data that shows these switches are generally ineffective in achieving any meaningful cost savings and instead disrupts the continuity of care, reduces medical adherence, and unnecessarily puts the patient at risk for reduced health. In fact, patients who are switched frequently experience adverse side effects, allergic reactions, and increases in health costs for additional testing, doctor's office and ER visits, and hospitalizations.

Prohibiting mid-year formulary changes introduces a measure of fairness. Consumers often choose a health plan based on its coverage of services and medications that best suit their medical needs. When a consumer signs the plan's contract during the enrollment period, they are bound by law to pay the premium, co-pays, and deductibles, and honor the contract's terms. Insurance plans, on the other hand, are not held to those same standards. New Yorkers deserve to have the assurance that the reason they chose their plan will remain in place for the entire year for which they are committed to.

During your inauguration speech, you invited us to join you in this fight for our future. Signing S.4111/A.4668 into law is the first step towards making sure the future for all New Yorkers is a healthier one.

As such, we offer you our partnership and look forward to working with you and your administration to ensure that patients are protected from this harmful practice.

Sincerely,

AARP New York
Aimed Alliance
Albany Regional Comprehensive Center for Hemophilia & von Willebrand Disease at Albany Medical College, Albany Medical Center
Allergy and Asthma Network
Alliance for Patient Access
American Association of Clinical Urologists
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District II
American College of Rheumatology
American Lung Association
American Urological Association
Arthritis Foundation
Bleeding Association of Northeastern New York
Bleeding Disorders Advocacy Network
Bleeding Disorders Association of the Southern Tier
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY)
Cerebral Palsy Association of New York State
Coalition for Hemophilia B
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO)
Colon Cancer Foundation
Consumer Service Society of New York
Epilepsy Foundation Northeastern New York, Inc.
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Health Care for All New York
Hemophilia Association of New York
Hemophilia Federation of America
Hemophilia Foundation of Upstate New York
Hispanic Health Network
Infusion Access Foundation (IAF)
Latino Commission on AIDS
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Mary M. Gooley Hemophilia Center
Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY)
Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.
NAACP New York State Conference
NAMI-NYS
National Hemophilia Foundation
National Hispanic Medical Association

National Infusion Center Association (NICA)
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)
National Psoriasis Foundation
New York Blood Center
New York Chapter American College of Physicians
New York City Hemophilia Chapter
New York State Academy of Family Physicians
New York State Association for Rural Health
New York State Bleeding Disorders Coalition (NYSBDC)
New York State Neurological Society
New York State Osteopathic Medical Society
New York State Psychiatric Association
New York State Radiological Society
New York State Rheumatology Society
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage (NYFAHC)
New York-Presbyterian / Weill Cornell Medical College Comprehensive Center for Hemophilia and Coagulation Disorders
Northeast Kidney Foundation
Northwell Health Hemostasis & Thrombosis Center
NYS Ophthalmological Society
NYS Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.
NYS Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
Patients Rising Now
Pharmacist Society of the State of New York (PSSNY)
Regional Comprehensive Hemophilia Diagnostic and Treatment Centers at Mt. Sinai Medical Center
Sickle Cell Thalassemia Patients Network
Susan G. Komen
The Hemophilia Treatment Center at Montefiore Medical Center
Western New York BloodCare

CC: Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin
Senator Neil Breslin
Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes