

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Honorable Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2342 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2419 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Doug Jones  
United States Senate  
330 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senate  
520 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives Ruiz and Wenstrup, and Senators Murkowski, Jones, and Cassidy:

The undersigned organizations write to thank you for your continued leadership to advance H.R. 2279/S. 2546, the Safe Step Act. These bills would implement important reforms to insurance-mandated step therapy by requiring a timely and medically appropriate appeals process. Given the detrimental impact of adverse step therapy protocols on the health of patients across the nation, we strongly support the Safe Step Act and urge you to seek expeditious passage of this legislation.

As you know, step therapy is a protocol used by health insurance companies that requires patients to try and fail on one or more insurer preferred medications before they will provide coverage for the medication initially agreed upon by the patient and their provider. Step therapy is widely used by health plans, and protocols vary greatly from plan to plan, even for the same disease state. When a step therapy protocol is inappropriate for a patient, it delays needed access to care and can result in devastating health outcomes. Anecdotes of patients undergoing preventable and irreversible surgeries, or even dying, as a result of badly implemented step therapy is common among many of the patient communities we represent.

The Safe Step Act takes a common sense and balanced approach to improving patient access by ensuring that commercial health plans provide an expeditious, transparent, and reasonable step therapy appeals process. Under the Act, plans must respond to step therapy appeals within 24-72 hours, and base their determinations on sound medical reasoning and the necessity to the patient. Plans must also make their appeals process available online to both patients and providers, including the information needed to submit a successful appeal.

Currently, 26 states across the nation have passed similar legislation to ensure that plans on the individual and group markets are providing reasonable step therapy appeals processes. These models have proven successful, and the protections should be extended to commercial plans.

To support patient access to the right treatment at the right time, we urge you to seek the passage of H.R. 2279/S. 2546, the Safe Step Act expeditiously. To discuss further, please contact Patrick Stone, Vice President of Government and Advocacy at the National Psoriasis Foundation, at [pstone@psoriasis.org](mailto:pstone@psoriasis.org). We appreciate your championship, and we look forward to partnering with you to resolve this critical patient access concern.

Sincerely,

Aimed Alliance  
Allergy Asthma Network  
Alliance for Patient Access  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College of Gastroenterology  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Diabetes Association  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Heart Association  
American Liver Foundation  
Arthritis Foundation  
Association for Clinical Oncology  
Chronic Disease Coalition  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Derma Care Access Network  
Digestive Disease National Coalition  
Digestive Health Physicians Association  
Global Healthy Living Foundation  
Headache & Migraine Policy Forum  
Hemophilia Federation of America  
International Essential Tremor Foundation  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
Mental Health America  
Movement Disorders Policy Coalition  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Eczema Association  
National Infusion Center Association

National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Pancreas Foundation  
National Patient Advocate Foundation  
Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health  
Patient Services, Inc.  
Project Sleep  
Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
Susan G. Komen  
The AIDS Institute  
The International Topical Steroid Addiction Network  
The Mighty  
Tourette Association of America  
U.S. Hereditary Angioedema Association