

February 1, 2017

The Honorable Laurie Monnes Anderson
State Capitol
900 Court St, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Anderson,

The Myositis Association (TMA) has as part of its mission to ensure that myositis patients have access to treatments needed to improve their quality of life. We support SB 526 since step therapy is a serious problem for our members and delays in treatment can be truly life-threatening.

SB 526 will help increase access to medications for myositis patients in Oregon. The problems with step therapy are:

- Step therapy currently denies access to critical medication for your constituents
- Step therapy requires “fail-first” the process whereby health plans and insurers frequently deny coverage of proven and effective medications.
- Step therapy requires medications within a class of drugs to be used before a second-line medication is tried.
- Step therapy is based solely on cost and does not take into consideration patients’ unique needs.

SB 526 corrects these problems because it will decrease the common and routine practice of denying patients the prescription medications they need.

The relationship that a patient, especially those with chronic illnesses, has with their provider is vital. SB 526 focuses on ensuring that individualized treatment decisions remain between the provider and the patient, while respecting the need to keep costs down. SB 526 does not ban step therapy, nor is it a mandate that establishes new benefits. SB 526 merely establishes that step therapy utilization tools should be based on the most current clinical evidence possible, and that the protocols established are issued to providers and patients in a transparent manner. The measure additionally provides a set of exceptions to step therapy that are based on medical evidence and necessity.

Please help myositis patients by supporting SB 526 in the Senate Committee on Health Care.

Gratefully,

Bob Goldberg
Executive Director
The Myositis Association

www.myositis.org