

Dear Senator Anderson,

The Western Neuropathy Association (WNA) wants to let you know that we wholeheartedly and urgently agree with the following letter and its request for your support from The Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF). We deal with patients in neuropathy support groups and individually.

We have an active neuropathy support group in Grants Pass and others in the development stage so are acquainted with the needs of Oregon residents. I have been assisting two patients living in Salem this week and last. They called for help in finding the best way to cope with this disease as they were fairly newly diagnosed with neuropathy. It can be difficult as doctors are not trained well in the Peripheral Nervous System. Even neurologists are trained chiefly about the Central Nervous System. So finding adequate help is sometimes difficult especially when nerve pain is present.

Allowing physicians to prescribe what they decide is correct for a patient is especially important as getting an appointment with the right one may take time. If they have to use the trial and fail method, it is the patient that suffers. It is not unusual to wait 3 months for an appointment with a neurologist.

For the Oregon patients we know need this help, we ask you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Bev Anderson

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

Dear Senator Anderson,

The Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF), which is dedicated to ensuring neuropathy patients obtain the necessary resources to access treatment to improve their quality of life, supports SB

526 which ensures that Oregon patients have timely access to treatments without the unnecessary delays caused by step therapy.

SB 526 will help increase access to medications for thousands of patients in Oregon suffering from neuropathy. Step therapy currently denies access to critical medication for your constituents suffering from neuropathy. "Step therapy" or "fail-first" is 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. The premise of this bill is excellent because it is an attempt to 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 neuropathy patients by supporting SB 526 in the Senate Committee on Health Care.

Regards,



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