



The Honorable Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care

900 Court St. NE, S-211, Salem, Oregon 97301

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care
January 31, 2017

Re: U.S. Pain Foundation Supports Senate Bill 526

Dear Chairwoman Monnes Anderson and members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

U.S. Pain Foundation is an organization created by people with pain for people with pain. As the leading patient-advocacy organization, we seek to educate, connect, inform and empower pain survivors, caregivers and healthcare providers while advocating on behalf of the entire pain community. With 100 million Americans living with chronic pain, which includes residents within the state of Oregon, U.S. Pain urges you to support Senate Bill 526 would ensure patients have access to the treatment they need when they need it.

Step therapy is an insurance cost-savings protocol that can cause negative outcomes for individuals living with the complex disease of chronic pain or mental illness who rely on the treatment regimen recommended by their health care provider to manage their condition. By forcing a patient to fail first on a series of treatments before receiving the originally prescribed medication, both physicians and consumers are forced to compromise their treatment decisions in a way that is dangerous, time consuming and more expensive in the long-term.

As you may be aware, SB 526 would permit a prescribing physician to request a step therapy override determination from a health plan or insurer on behalf of a patient to ensure the individual has the best treatment option available.

Due to a lack of transparency and patient safeguards in the state of Oregon patients living with various forms of chronic pain and invisible illnesses can suffer for weeks or even months before a decision is made by the insurer on whether a physician-approved treatment is authorized.

Time is of the essence for those residents living with a condition that requires careful consideration in creating a successful treatment plan. When prescribed treatments are delayed, their condition often deteriorates, which in turn can lead to additional emergency room visits and sometimes costly hospitalizations. Delays in treatment can not only worsen a patient's condition, but also increase overall costs to the state and the healthcare system.

For the above listed reasons, U.S. Pain hopes you will support the chronic pain community by supporting Senate Bill 526. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Respectfully,

Shaina Smith

Shaina Smith

Director of State Advocacy & Alliance Development

U.S. Pain Foundation

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