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February 17, 2017

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
Senate Committee on Health Care
Oregon Senate
Salem, Oregon

RE: SB 526

Dear Senator Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Academy of Integrative Pain Management (formerly American Academy of Pain Management) to support SB 526, an act modifying requirements applicable to step therapy protocols imposed by health insurers. Passage of this legislation would require that health authorize an insured to bypass use of one or more step drugs if the step drug is contraindicated, would likely cause an adverse reaction or harm, is expected to be ineffective, is not medically necessary, or has already been tried and failed by the insured. Further, and of vital importance, this legislation would require an insurer to make a step therapy exception determination within 72 hours of receipt of the request or within 24 hours in emergency situations. **Passage of SB 526 will help to ensure that patients are able to receive the optimal medication for their particular situation, as determined by their health care provider, and would result in an overall financial savings to the patient and the healthcare system.**

All too often, the utilization of step therapy forces patients with serious and degenerative medical conditions to undergo an indefinite, painful, and often dangerous, process of trial and error before finally receiving the treatment originally recommended by their health care provider. In some cases, the process can cause patients' medical conditions to deteriorate, increasing the need for more expensive and invasive medical treatment in the future. What's more, patients' untreated conditions can increase the incidence of depression, non-compliance, and self-medication. Further, the step therapy process can increase the direct cost of health care due to increased hospital admissions and excessive use of emergency rooms. Indirect costs can include lost wages and productivity of both healthcare consumers and their caregivers.

AIPM believes that passage of SB 526 will help to ensure that patients are able to receive the optimal medication for their particular situation, as determined by their health care provider, and will also result in an overall financial savings to the patient and the healthcare system. I respectfully urge you to sign this bill into law, and I am happy to discuss this issue with you or your staff if necessary. Please feel free to contact me by email at kduensing@aapainmanage.org, or by telephone at 209-288-2214.

About AIPM: The Academy of Integrative Pain Management is the premier organization for all clinicians who care for people with pain. It is the largest pain management organization in the nation and the only one that embraces, as part of its mission statement, an integrative model of care, which: is patient-centered; considers the whole person; encourages healthful lifestyle changes as part of the first line of treatment to restore wellness; is evidence-based; brings together all appropriate therapeutic approaches to reduce pain and achieve optimal health and healing; and, encourages a team approach.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Duensing".

Katie Duensing, J.D.
Assistant Director for Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
State Pain Policy Advocacy Network (SPPAN)
Academy of Integrative Pain Management

Cc: Senator Frederick Kruse