



**Our Mission:** To drive efforts to cure psoriatic disease and improve the lives of those affected.

**RE: Support for HB 2517- A**

Dear Senator Patterson and members of the Senate Health Care Committee,

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is a non-profit organization with a mission to drive efforts to cure psoriatic disease and improve the lives of those affected. The NPF is the leading patient advocacy group for more than 8.3 million Americans and the more than 105,000 Oregon residents living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. I write to you today to express our support for HB 2517.

Each day, our patients face the reality of barriers to health care through utilization management practices that impact treatment, health, and well-being. When these policies interfere with the patient-physician relationship, they can result in delayed treatment, increased disease activity, loss of function, and potentially irreversible disease progression.

One practice called step therapy, also known as 'fail first', directs patients toward medications that are preferred on the formulary, requiring patients to 'fail first', often, multiple times, on medications chosen by the insurance company before they receive coverage for the treatment originally prescribed by their provider. Due to the heterogeneous nature of psoriatic disease, patients need access to a broad range of treatment choices, making a one-size-fits-all approach harmful for patients.

It is critical that patients can receive an exception to the required step therapy practice when the plan directed medication is inappropriate. Delays in treatment can have devastating health implications that are avoidable when patients have access to a timely, clear, and accessible exception request process. A recent study shows that step therapy protocols are inconsistent across payers, creating additional confusion and frustration for patients and their providers acting on their behalf.<sup>1</sup> HB 2517 would set a standard for the exception request process including timelines, clinical review criteria, and making the exception process transparent and straightforward.

Further, due to COVID-19, it is more important than ever for patients living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis to stay on their treatments. Without access to the appropriate treatment, patients with psoriatic disease are at risk of complications that could require trips to the emergency department or additional procedures. It is of utmost importance that unnecessary barriers to the appropriate treatments are addressed for patients – including commonsense guardrails on utilization management.

The NPF appreciates the Committee's consideration of this important matter, and respectfully requests your support of HB 2517. Should you have any questions regarding this issue please contact me at [kstiffler@psoriasis.org](mailto:kstiffler@psoriasis.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristen Stiffler". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kristen Stiffler  
National Psoriasis Foundation

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<sup>1</sup> Chambers JD, Kim DD, Pope EF, Graff JS, Wilkinson CL, Neumann PJ. Specialty Drug Coverage Varies Across Commercial Health Plans In The US. Health Affairs. 2018;37(7):1041-47.