

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee,

My name is Christopher Pettit. I am an advocate for the National Psoriasis Foundation. I am here today to encourage you to vote yes to provide guardrails in utilization management techniques which impacts a patient's access to care. One specifically is step therapy.

I was diagnosed with severe plaque psoriasis at the age of 13 and I've have had to fight my insurance for every medication my doctor has recommended. At its worse, similar to how I stand before you today, my disease covers 85% of my body with thick, itchy plaques that crack and bleed. It feels like chapped lips, but all over my body. The pain from my open wounds and the constant itching sensation keeps me up all hours of the night.

Topicals are typically the first step, but when your body is 85% covered in thick plaques, it takes a whole tube just to get one coat of medication on. Due to the severity of my disease I was told I should try a biologic medication. Next was a drug which is typically prescribed for cancer. Due to my high liver values my provider and I knew this would not be a good fit, but it was what my insurer would cover so I was forced to try it.

After two months of appeals, I was approved for a TNF inhibitor. I started noticing clearing within 6 weeks, but it suddenly stopped working. My provider thought that because I was a bigger guy, it was the dosage and wanted to increase my injections, but again, insurance denied treatment. My disease was very aggressive and newer more effective drugs had hit the market, once again I was blocked at this point, the staff at my dermatologist's office didn't feel we would have any success in overturning the decision. Because of this, I found a new provider and was able to get into a bridge program through the manufacturer until I was able to win the appeal. That medication kept me clear for over a year, but it took much longer to achieve that level of remission because my disease had started to spread and worsen in the months I was waiting on insurance approval. During those months without treatment, the pain and uncomfortable plaques returned, I would bleed all over my clothing and furniture and I became increasingly irritable due to the lack of sleep, which impacted my parenting and relationships.

Not only has delayed treatment caused pain and suffering, it has impacted me at a psychological and emotional level. I have suffered years of embarrassment caused by an endless trail of skin flakes and disgusted stares. I was even asked by a family member to not come over to their house because they would have to spend hours cleaning up my skin shedding's after I left.

I would not want anyone to have to go through the months of stress, pain, and frustration I had to go through. I encourage this committee to vote yes on SB 139 to ensure that patients have a better process to navigate when trying to access treatment options that are right for them.

Chris Pettit

Beaverton Resident