



February 6, 2019

The Honorable Laurie Monnes Anderson
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street, NE
S-211
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 139 – Improves step therapy

Dear Chairperson Monnes Anderson,

On behalf of the more than 13,800 U.S. members of the American Academy of Dermatology Association (“Academy”), we write in strong support SB 139. This legislation would be a critical step to ensure patients have access to their prescription medicines. Pursuant to SB 139, health insurers would be required to expeditiously grant a step therapy override determination request if, in the professional judgment of the prescribing physician, the step therapy requirement would be medically inappropriate for that patient. We urge members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Health Care to support SB 139.

Step therapy protocols, a cost containment tool used by health insurance plans, require patients to try one or more prescription drugs before coverage is provided for a drug selected by the patient’s health care provider. We understand the need to contain health care costs, but we are concerned that step therapy strategies for medication and other treatment selection have the potential to impact patient outcomes and quality of life.

Requiring patients to try and fail treatments jeopardizes the health of patients, potentially resulting in dangerous consequences. In some instances, health plans force patients to return to the same treatments that have proven to be ineffective when tried previously under a different health plan. The decision to change plans may occur through no fault of the patient but rather an employer’s decision to change plans.

Further, step therapy interferes with the patient-physician relationship by preventing dermatologists from prescribing drugs they know will provide the best treatment results in the most effective manner. SB 139 would ensure that step therapy protocols used by health plans in Oregon will preserve the health care provider’s right to make treatment decisions in

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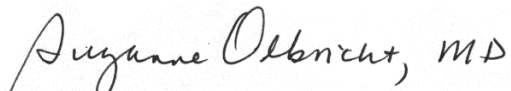
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the best interest of the patient. Physicians know their patients' medical history, which enables them to identify potential contraindications and life-threatening adverse reactions. Retaining physicians' medical judgement in patients' treatment plans is a cost-effective way to prevent health care dollars from being used on medications that are not effective. It also prevents patients from a prolonged treatment that includes scheduling multiple visits to their physician and spending money on prescription medications that are not effective.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on this important public health issue and urge your support for SB 139. As physicians, our number one priority is the health and welfare of our patients. The enactment of this legislation will improve access to prescription medications that are in the best interest of the patient. For further information, please contact Lisa Albany, director, state policy for the Academy at lalbany@aad.org (202) 842-3555.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne Olbricht, MD". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Suzanne Olbricht, MD, FAAD
President
American Academy of Dermatology Association