



February 2, 2021

VIA Electronic Submission

Chairman Representative Brenda Landwehr
Kansas State House

RE: Susan G. Komen Support for HB 2157

Thank you for your service during these trying times. We hope you and your loved ones are staying healthy, as you tackle some of the challenging issues facing the state and nation.

My name is Lauren Marquette and I am the Senior Regional Manager of State Policy and Advocacy for Susan G. Komen. I am writing to you on behalf of breast cancer patients in Kansas to urge your **support of HB 2157** for reforming the state's step-therapy protocols.

Access to effective and affordable drugs is a critical part of treating breast cancer, yet patients face a number of utilization management (UM) practices that impede access to the treatments prescribed by their physician. These strategies are employed so that payers, including private insurers and Medicare, can reduce their spending on drugs by shifting costs onto patients. One of these UM practices is step therapy, also known as 'fail-first', which requires patients to try and fail preferred or older treatments methods before accessing the most current form of treatment.

Unfortunately, most step therapy protocols rely on generalized information regarding patients and their treatments as opposed to considering unique patient experiences and responses to different treatments. This prevents or delays patients from utilizing the most up to date treatments and hinders patients and physicians from deciding jointly which course of treatment will be best for the individual.

Physicians must be able to make decisions based on the unique needs of each patient, and there must be clear and transparent scenarios under which physicians can override decision-making by health plans that endangers patients' health. The stakes for these patients are high. Slight deviations in treatment and variations between drugs, even those in the same therapeutic class, can cause serious adverse events. The resulting disease progression can be irreversible, life threatening, and result in increased utilization of healthcare resources.

HB 2157 does not prohibit insurers from using step therapy but seeks to balance cost containment with patient needs.

More specifically, the legislation protects patients by: (1) Ensuring that the exceptions process for step therapy is explicit, transparent, and accessible to patients and health care providers; and (2) Establishing a basic framework that enables physicians to override step therapy protocols where it is medically necessary.

Forcing patients to endure unnecessary barriers makes it more likely that these patients could need additional medical interventions or even hospitalization, placing additional burdens on an already burdened healthcare system.

Komen thanks you for your leadership and for your consideration of our request. We respectfully request your support of HB 2157.

Sincerely,

Lauren Marquette
Susan G. Komen
Senior Regional Manager, State Policy & Advocacy