Position Statement on Access to Care
(Considered by the National Psoriasis Foundation Medical Board on March 20, 2014; Approved by the Medical Board July 2014)

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) supports the following policy statement:

Physicians should have the entire panoply of treatment options available when treating individuals with psoriatic disease as well as the freedom to determine the course of treatment based on individual considerations including disease severity and prior treatments attempted, overlapping medical and immune conditions, and safety considerations. It is well documented that treatments including similar agents do not confer equivalent adherence, safety, and tolerability profiles. Insurance policies which result in forced drug switching, treatment gaps, and cessation of effective therapy pose a danger to the patient in lost access to therapy and disease flares, as well as immunogenicity, adverse effects, and secondary nonresponse. Downstream effects of this restricted access lead to the complications of uncontrolled disease for the patient, disabilities, and increased health care costs.

The National Psoriasis Foundation supports efforts to reduce impediments to accessing care. Specifically the NPF:

- Opposes step therapy, fail first policies, and tiering of biologics and novel therapies.
- Opposes physician tiering and efforts to further restrict the already limited access patients have to dermatologists and rheumatologists with an expertise in psoriatic disease.
- Supports reigning in and limiting the maximum co-insurance and out of pocket expenses for patients to enable patients to have real access to affordable medications.
- Supports the development and use of standardized prior authorization forms. Standardized prior authorization forms will improve efficient, quality patient care. Standardized forms that easily interface with Electronic Health Records and reduce the administrative burden for practices and insurance companies will ensure timely delivery of care.
- Encouraging prior authorizations and specialty pharmacy treatment distribution to occur in a reasonable time frame with a clear explanation of coverage to the patient and prescribing physician.

The National Psoriasis Foundation is the largest psoriasis patient advocacy organization and charitable funder of psoriatic disease research worldwide and exists to find a cure for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Psoriasis in the United States affects approximately 7.5 million Americans. Psoriasis, the most prevalent autoimmune disease in the nation, is a noncontagious, chronic, inflammatory, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there is no cure. It appears on the skin, most often as red, scaly patches that itch, can bleed, and requires sophisticated medical intervention.

Psoriasis is a systemic, inflammatory autoimmune disease that is connected with an elevated risk for other serious, chronic and life-threatening comorbid conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, and stroke. A higher prevalence of atherosclerosis, Crohn’s disease, cancer, metabolic syndrome and liver disease are found in people with psoriasis as compared to the general population. Up to 30 percent of people with psoriasis also develop potentially disabling psoriatic arthritis. In addition, people with psoriasis experience higher rates of depression and anxiety, and people with severe psoriasis die four years younger, on average, than people without the disease.
Further, the economic consequences of psoriasis, both for individuals and the health care system, are significant. The annual cost of psoriasis in the U.S. is estimated at $135 billion due to medical expenses and lost wages. The National Psoriasis Foundation is committed to supporting policies and programs aimed at curing psoriatic diseases and dramatically improving the health outcomes for all individual with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Ending restrictive health insurance policies that are harmful to individuals with psoriatic disease is critical to improving outcomes. Many insured patients are unable to afford the medical care and the full range of treatments necessary to manage serious, chronic and potentially debilitating diseases including psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

References


ix For more information about comorbidities, see the National Psoriasis Foundation Comorbid Conditions Issue Brief.


