Dear Members of the Ohio Federal Congressional Delegation:

We represent an expansive and diverse group of patients and health care providers in Ohio who share a common goal of improving the health of patients across the country. Today we write to express our support for federal step therapy reform legislation, which would ensure that patients with serious diseases, such as cancer, epilepsy, and diabetes, are able to access the medications they need without having to try another medicine and be forced to “fail first.”

This practice, commonly referred to as “fail first” or “step therapy,” is used by health insurers to force patients to try medications that insurance companies choose, requiring the patient to “fail first” before gaining access to the medicine originally prescribed by their health care provider. This insurance practice undermines a doctor’s ability to appropriately treat patients with serious diseases and can greatly impede patient recovery.

Late last year, under bipartisan leadership in Ohio, our state passed legislation to reform and limit this practice by health insurers, thereby helping to get the right medicines to patients faster.

In fact, Ohio is not alone. Nearly two dozen states have passed similar laws to limit or reform step therapy practices by health insurers, and many more are considering related legislation. Why? Because these step therapy practices are not limited by the state – the fail first protocols cross state borders and directly impact patients all across our country. And while these states are making great progress in protecting patients with state-regulated plans, more needs to be done at the federal level to close the gap for those Minnesotans on federally-regulated plans.

Last Congress, H.R. 2077, the Restoring the Patient’s Voice Act of 2017, was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by two physicians, Congressman Brad Wenstrup (R-OH) and Congressman Raul Ruiz (D-CA), who understand the positive impact H.R. 2077 will have on improving the health and welfare of millions of patients across the country.

We ask for your support of federal step therapy reform legislation as a fair and balanced way to put health care providers and patients back in charge of their health care. It is a common-sense solution that establishes reasonable reforms and limits on step therapy practices and ensures that a health care provider’s professional judgment and a thorough review of a patient’s history are part of a successful health care equation.

On behalf of our members, which includes patients, physicians, and other health care providers, we thank you for your review and consideration of federal step therapy reform legislation and respectfully request your affirmative support.

Sincerely,

The Ohio Step Therapy Coalition

*Academy of Medicine of Cleveland and Northern Ohio*

*Alliance for Patient Access*
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Pediatrics Ohio Chapter
American Cancer Society
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons, Ohio Chapter
Alliance for Patient Access
American Heart Association
American Lung Association, Ohio and Michigan
Arthritis Foundation
Beacon Charitable Pharmacy
Columbus Chapter Black Nurses Association
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America: national, Central Ohio, and Southwest Ohio
Epilepsy Alliance Ohio
Epilepsy Association
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Healing Hearts of Central Ohio
Lupus Foundation of America, Greater Ohio
Mended Hearts of Central Ohio
Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition
Mental Health America of Franklin County
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Ohio
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Psoriasis Foundation
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Ohio Asian American Health Coalition
Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses
Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
Ohio Association of Rheumatology
Ohio Bleeding Disorders Council
Ohio Chapter of the American College of Cardiology
Ohio Dermatological Association
Ohio Federation for Health Equity and Social Justice
Ohio Foot and Ankle Medical Association
Ohio Hematology Oncology Society
Ohio Nurses Association
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Ohio Pharmacist Association
Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association
Ohio Rare Action Network
Ohio Sickle Cell and Health Association
Ohio State Medical Association
Prevent Blindness Ohio
Public Children Services Association of Ohio
Susan G. Komen Columbus, Northeast Ohio, Northwest Ohio, Southwest Ohio
The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers
U.S. Pain Foundation