June 5, 2018

Representative Joseph M. McNamara, Chairman
House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903


Dear Chairman McNamara:

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is a non-profit, voluntary health agency dedicated to curing psoriatic disease and improving the lives of those affected. The Psoriasis Foundation is the leading patient advocacy group for the 8.3 million Americans and roughly 34,000 Rhode Island residents living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

Step therapy, also known as ‘fail first’, is a health insurance mandate that is intended to control spending on prescription drugs. This tool requires patients to ‘fail first’, often multiple times, on certain medications before they are able to receive the treatment originally prescribed by their physician. All too often, this delays access to optimal therapy, while potentially exacerbating a patient’s condition.

As systemic diseases associated with life-altering symptoms, the timely treatment of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis is of the utmost importance when managing long-term patient health. The NPF Medical Board recognizes the insurance companies’ need to keep costs down. However, the best interests of the patient must be the priority for both physicians and insurers alike.

The legislation before you ensures that step therapy is based on the most current clinical data and that it is available to the consumer in a transparent manner. It also outlines clear and concise exceptions to step therapy protocols based on medical necessity. This legislation, which is not a ban, strikes a fair balance between cost containment and health of the patient.

When considering H 8254 (McKiernan) we ask that the committee report this measure favorably.

Sincerely,

Randy Beranek
President and CEO

CC: Members of the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare