March 21st, 2019

The Honorable Annette Cleveland  
Chair, Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee  
435A J.A Cherberg Bldg.  
PO Box 40466  
Olympia WA 98504

RE: Support ESHB 1879- Regulating and reporting of utilization management in prescription drug benefits.

Dear Chairwoman Cleveland and members of the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee,

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is a non-profit organization with a mission to drive efforts to cure psoriatic disease and improve the lives of those affected. The NPF is the leading patient advocacy group for more than 8.3 million Americans and the roughly 186,424 Washington residents living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. I write to you today to express our support for ESHB 1879.

Utilization management (UM), such as prior authorization and step therapy, are formal techniques used by health insurers or third-party administrators, that are designed to monitor the use of or evaluate the medical necessity, appropriateness, efficacy or efficiency of health care services, procedures or settings. While UM tools can successfully control costs, in some instances, these practices may do more harm than good. The use of these techniques often create significant barriers to care and delay access to optimal therapy, while potentially exacerbating a patient’s condition.

An analysis focused on 12 medications used to treat plaque psoriasis, Crohn’s disease, and colitis found that between 2015 and 2016, employer plans increased the use of UM on these products from 18% to 60%. This is a 42% increase in just one year.¹ Without proper guidelines, UM limits a health care provider’s ability to tailor care to individual patient needs. For patients living with serious or chronic illnesses, prolonging ineffective treatment and delaying access to the right treatment may result in increased disease activity, loss of function, possible irreversible progression of disability, and abandonment of treatment by the patient.

ESHB 1879 creates safeguards for Washingtonians, including access to a clear and expeditious process to request a step therapy exception when it is not medically appropriate. We encourage the committee to vote favorably for this legislation.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Brittany Duffy-Goche with the National Psoriasis Foundation at bduffy-goche@psoriasis.org.

Sincerely,

Randy Beranek  
President & CEO