

Insurance and Real Estate Committee Public Hearing –March 13, 2014

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 394(RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING
REQUIREMENTS FOR INSURERS' USE OF STEP THERAPY**

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, Senator Hartley, Representative Wright, Senator Kelley, Representative Sampson and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee.

Thanks for the opportunity to submit written testimony. I am writing to ask that you pass S.B. 394(RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR INSURERS' USE OF STEP THERAPY.

My name is Mary Bois, and I live in Kensington. I volunteer for the National MS Society, where I serve as a self-help group leader, MS Activist and programs committee member. I have been living with MS since 1983.

Multiple sclerosis is a devastating progressive illness. Medications are available to help reduce the frequency of attacks and slow the progression of the disease for those with relapsing forms of MS. We also have a number of medications that are used in symptom management. Some of these medications are used "off-label" by physicians.

In 2013, the legislature passed Public Act No. 13234, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING, HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH. Section 126 of this legislation provides details for a Medicaid Step Therapy program. The language in this bill provides a number of consumer protections and I am requesting that the same language be included within S.B. No. 394 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR INSURERS' USE OF STEP THERAPY.

Most importantly, the 2014 legislation should:

1. Require that the patient try and fail only one drug on the formulary before another one can be prescribed and be eligible for payment
2. Not apply to any mental health-related drugs, and

3. Establish a method for health care providers to exempt any patient from a step therapy requirement, if:
 - The drug required by the insurance company has proven ineffective previously
 - The drug is expected to be ineffective
 - The drug will likely cause adverse events or harm the patient, or
 - It is in the best interest of the patient to be exempted

4. Limit the duration of a drug trial – for those patients that must still go through a step protocol – to 30 days.

Step therapy can delay access to appropriate medications that may slow the progression of MS. When disability with MS occurs it has a negative impact on the person, their family, and society.

As a self-help group leader, I have seen the negative impact on individuals, couples, and families trying to deal with the stress of MS. There are additional expenses, role reversals in families, and it is even more difficult adding changing medicines to find they don't work after all. All of this contributes to stress. Stress is a problem in all illnesses. In my own experience with MS and in the lives of my group members and friends with MS, stress is most wearing, with unpredictable results, often worsening the symptoms.

Please pass S.B. No. 394 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR INSURERS' USE OF STEP THERAPY.

Thank you,

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