



February 27, 2019

Dear Chair Moran and members of the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee,

The following organizations urge your support of HF 815, legislation that will expand Minnesota's step therapy law and ensure all Minnesotans are protected and being provided quick access to the medicines they need.

Step therapy protocols (sometimes referred to as "fail first") require patients to try and fail at least one medication chosen by a health plan before the plan will cover the medication that was originally prescribed by a provider. For those living with a serious or chronic illness, prolonging ineffective treatment (and delaying access to the right treatment) may result in possible irreversible progression of a disease, loss of function, and adverse effects.

Last session, the Minnesota legislature unanimously approved a bill (HF 3196) that created a process to allow providers to request an exception to a step therapy protocol when they believe it in their patient's best interest. The law does not ban the practice of step therapy or mandate drug coverage. A provider may use one of the following circumstances when requesting an override:

1. The drug required under step therapy is likely to cause an adverse reaction, could negatively impact a person's daily life, or would be physically or mentally harmful.
2. The patient has tried a drug required under step therapy which is in the same pharmacologic class or has the same mechanism of action.
3. The patient is currently stable on a prescription drug selected by the doctor while on a current or previous insurance plan.

Implemented on January 1, 2019, this legislation applies only to health plans in the private marketplace and state employee plans. HF 815 would extend protections of this law to public programs such as Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare, ensuring that all Minnesotan's that seek coverage under a state regulated plan would have these protections.

Please help ensure Minnesotans have access to the medicines they need and support SF 1026/HF 815.