

The Safe Step Act: A Patient Centered Solution to Medication Hurdles



ASCP is working with a bipartisan team of legislators to pass H.R. 2279, the Safe Step Act, in both chambers of Congress. This common sense legislation would implement patient protections prior to introducing step therapy protocols. This legislation is supported by pharmacists, physicians, advocacy groups, and patients throughout the country.

What is Step Therapy?

Step therapy is a tool utilized by insurance plans and sponsors that requires patients to “fail first” on an insurer preferred medication before they can receive coverage for the medication prescribed for them by their medical team. In many instances, this insurance intervention can lead to worsened health outcomes for patients suffering with chronic conditions and comorbidities. This intervention can also lead to the delay in treatment and/or interruption in successful treatment.

The older adult population (individuals > 65 years of age) are the fastest growing segment of the population and the highest consumer of prescription medications (39% of all medications dispensed in the United States).¹ Given this unique population, older adult patients are at risk of further discriminatory activity by health insurers with limited opportunity for exceptions.

The Safe Step Act Will Put Patients and Seniors First

This legislation will require health plans to implement a clear appeal process so that patients and their healthcare team can have access to their trusted medications without additional hurdles. This bill will also establish a time frame in which insurers must respond to appeals from patients. This will help expedite patient access to needed medication. In addition to these insurance changes, The Safe Step Act will outline circumstances in which a patient can be exempt from step therapy when medically appropriate. This will ensure that patients will not be severed from their trusted medications due to administrative systems and changes to formularies. We urge you to sign on to this legislation and let your constituents know that you value quality healthcare and accessible medications.

This bipartisan legislation is also supported by: The AIDS Institute, Alliance for Patient Access, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American College of Rheumatology, American Diabetes Association, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, Arthritis Foundation, Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Epilepsy Foundation, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Infusion Center Association, National Psoriasis Foundation, and many others.

Learn more at [ASCP.com/advocacy](https://www.ascp.com/advocacy)

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institute on Aging. www.nia.nih.gov/living-long-well-21st-century-strategic-directions-research-aging/introduction. Accessed April 2019.

The Safe Step Act will remove administrative hurdles and help expedite patient access to critical medications.

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