

# REMOVE ADMINISTRATIVE RED TAPE: CO-SPONSOR H.R. 2279 - THE SAFE STEP ACT

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 physicians, pharmacists, 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.

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).<sup>1</sup> 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 providers 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 also 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.

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](http://www.nia.nih.gov/living-long-well-21st-century-strategic-directions-research-aging/introduction). Accessed April 2019.

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