



February 24, 2026

The Honorable Susan Donovan
Chair, House Health Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1105

The Honorable Joshua Giraldo
Vice Chair, House Health Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1105

RE: H. 7539 – Step Therapy Protocol Reform

Chair Donovan and Ranking Member Giraldo:

On behalf of the Movement Disorders Policy Coalition, I am writing in support of H. 7539. This legislation is critical in ensuring patients – including those with movement disorders – can access the therapies their health care provider prescribes, in a timely and appropriate manner, by ensuring a clear path through the step therapy process.

The [Movement Disorders Policy Coalition](#) (MDPC) serves as a platform from which stakeholders, including health care providers and patients, can provide input on policy decisions impacting patient-centered care for those living with movement disorders. As a coalition of stakeholder groups across the movement disorders space, MDPC advocates at the federal, state, and health plan levels for key health reforms that increase access to personalized care for patients with movement disorders including Parkinson’s disease, essential tremor, tardive dyskinesia, Tourette Syndrome, dystonia, ataxia and Huntington’s disease.

Step therapy is a utilization management tool used by health insurance plans to direct access to medication and contain health care insurer costs. Sometimes called “fail first,” step therapy protocols require a patient to try and fail one or more insurer-preferred medications, often lower cost to the insurer, before he or she can access the medication prescribed by their healthcare provider. According to a 2022 survey conducted by the Alliance for Patient Access (AfPA), 98% of physicians identify step therapy as a significant barrier.¹ Onerous or lengthy step therapy protocols interfere with the physician-patient relationship, delaying accessing appropriate care, and in turn leading to increased burden on both patients and their health care providers.

People living with movement disorders experience significant challenges in everyday life and may use treatment regimens to manage their complex conditions. Timely access to effective therapy is paramount to ensuring these patients can successfully manage their disease and have quality of life. Because each patient is different, treatment decisions should be considered on an individual basis, based on the patient’s health care status and clinician’s expertise, rather than

¹ Alliance for Patient Access. Physician Burnout & Utilization Management Survey
https://allianceforpatientaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AfPA_Physician-Burnout-Utilization-Management_Tri-fold_DIGITAL_November-2024.pdf

based on rigid insurer step therapy protocols. Patients with movement disorders need direct, continuous access to the medications that have been demonstrated to treat both the physical and mental health symptoms of their condition.

The course of care prescribed by physicians and other healthcare providers is the foundation of patient-centric care. When health care plans interfere with that process and limit the course of treatment, it jeopardizes the patient's overall health.

H. 7539 would improve patient access by requiring insurance companies to establish a clear and convenient process for patients and providers to request exceptions from step therapy protocols. While the bill does not prohibit the use of step therapy or limit the number of steps that an insurer can require, it does outline specific instances where an exception to step therapy protocols would be granted. Clear exceptions, coupled with more efficient response times to step therapy appeals, will help improve access to medications and protect the provider-patient relationship that is critical to successful care.

On behalf of the Movement Disorders Policy Coalition and our membership, we ask that you support H. 7539 and thank you for your leadership on this important issue. If we can provide further details or answer any questions, please reach out to Payton Marvin at pmarvin@allianceforpatientaccess.org.

Sincerely,

Movement Disorders Policy Coalition

Co-Signing Organizations:

Aimed Alliance

Alliance for Patient Access

American Parkinson Disease Association

Caregiver Action Network

Clinical Neurological Society of America

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

Help 4 HD International

HD Reach

Huntington's Disease Society of America

Huntington's Disease Youth Organization

National Ataxia Foundation

National Organization for Tardive Dyskinesia

Parkinson's Foundation

Parkinson & Movement Disorder Alliance

Tourette Association of America

The STARR Coalition

*Movement Disorders
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CC:

Rep. Ackerman

Rep. Boylan

Rep. Fogarty

Rep. Hopkins

Rep. McGaw

Rep. Potter

Rep. Stewart

Rep. Bennett

Rep. Cotter

Rep. Handy

Rep. Kislak

Rep. Place

Rep. Speakman