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April 1, 2015

The Honorable Rob Bonta  
Chairman, Assembly Committee on Health  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0018

**Re: Support of AB 374 (Nazarian) – Relating to Health Care Coverage for Prescription Drugs and Step Therapy Protocols**

Dear Assembly Member Bonta:

The Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO) is a national association composed of 30 state and regional professional rheumatology societies formed to ensure excellence and access to the highest quality care for patients with rheumatologic and musculoskeletal disease.

**As you consider AB 374 (Nazarian), CSRO wishes to convey its support for the legislation.**

Step Therapy/Fail First policies have been a growing tool used by insurance companies. When left unchecked, this process creates significant negative outcomes for patients and often increases costs to states and the healthcare system due to worsening patient conditions from delayed or inappropriate treatment.

As of 2010, nearly 60% of all insurers were using step therapy, by now, that number has likely grown significantly. At the same time, studies have shown as many as 90% of physicians say that step therapy negatively affects their patients.

The provisions contained in AB 374 set the groundwork for basic regulations that will protect a patient's ability to receive appropriate care. These provisions define how step therapy can be implemented with appropriate medical oversight and offer safe pathways for patients and doctors to quickly override step therapy protocols when necessary.

CSRO recognizes that legislatures are concerned with the availability of cost saving measures within healthcare. AB 374 offers much needed and straightforward guidelines that regulate the usage of step therapy, without restricting healthcare plans from utilizing this measure.

Sincerely,



Michael Schweitz, MD  
President  
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations