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January 24, 2017

Honorable Representative Joel Fry  
Chair, Human Resources Committee  
ADDRESS  
CITY, IA ZIP

**Re: Support of HSB 26 – Step Therapy Protocols**

Dear Chairman Fry:

On behalf of the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO), I am writing to express the importance of HSB 26, a bill that seeks to place beneficial limits on step therapy protocols in an effort to ensure patient safety and access to appropriate treatment options.

Step therapy, also known as “fail-first,” is a tool insurers use that requires patients to try one or more drugs chosen by the insurer before coverage is granted for the drug originally prescribed by a physician.

Step therapy was created to limit how much insurers spend covering patients’ medications, but it has evolved into a one-size-fits-all policy that in some cases puts patients at significant risk of adverse outcomes. For many physicians and patients, step therapy has become a significant barrier to getting the right care at the right time.

**HSB 26 does not prohibit insurers from using step therapy but seeks to balance cost containment with patient needs. More specifically, it protects patients by:**

- (1) Ensuring that step therapy programs are based on clinical guidelines developed and endorsed by a multidisciplinary panel of experts and are based on high-quality studies, research, and medical practice;*
- (2) Ensuring that the exceptions process for step therapy is explicit, transparent, and accessible to patients and health care providers; and*
- (3) Establishing a basic framework that enables physicians to override step therapy protocols where it is medically necessary.*

For these reasons, the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations requests that you allow and favorably vote in support of HSB 26. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael Stevens, MD  
President, CSRO