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Testimony of Marc Eisen, M.D.  
On behalf of the  
CT Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society  
CT ENT Society  
CT Society of Eye Physicians  
CT Urology Society

**In Support of Proposed Bill No. 36, *AN ACT PROHIBITING HEALTH CARRIERS FROM REQUIRING THE USE OF STEP THERAPY FOR CERTAIN PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.***

Good Morning Senators Lesser, Kelly Representative. Scanlon and Pavalock-DAmato, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. My name is Marc Eisen, M.D. and I am a board certified Otolaryngologist practicing in Hartford, CT. I am President of the CT ENT Society and I am here today on behalf of over 1000 physicians practicing in this state from the above specialty medical Societies to speak in strong support of the language and intent of Proposed Bill No. 36, An Act Prohibiting Health Carriers From Requiring The Use Of Step Therapy For Certain Prescription Drugs.

This legislation would reinforce existing laws that ensure patients have access to their prescription medicines. Pursuant to CT Gen Stat § 38a-510 (2015), health insurers are required to expeditiously grant a step therapy override determination request if, in the professional judgment of the prescribing physician, the step therapy requirement would be medically inappropriate for that patient. This law has served as a model for more than a dozen states that have recently enacted or introduced legislation to reform step therapy. For the sake of our patient's health and well-being, it is critical that this law is enforced; therefore, we urge members of the Public Health Committee to support RB 36. Step therapy protocols are a cost containment tool used by health insurance plans. They require patients to try one or more prescription drugs before coverage is provided for a drug selected by the patient's health care provider as most appropriate for that patient. We understand the need to contain health care costs, but we are concerned that step therapy strategies for medication and other treatment selection will adversely impact patient outcomes and quality of life.

Requiring patients to try and fail suboptimal treatments jeopardizes the health of patients, potentially resulting in dangerous consequences. In some instances, health plans force patients to return to the same treatments that have proven to be ineffective when tried previously under a different health plan, or when the formulary changes. The decision to change plans may occur through no fault of the patients but rather an employer's decision to change plans.

Further, step therapy interferes with the patient-physician relationship by preventing physicians from prescribing drugs they know will provide the best treatment results in the most effective manner. RB 36 ensures that the health care provider's right to make treatment decisions in the best interest of the patient, particularly in the setting of established, effective treatment for disabling, chronic or life-threatening diseases or conditions will be preserved. Physicians know their patients' medical histories,

which enables them to identify potential contraindications and life-threatening adverse reactions. Retaining physicians' medical judgment in patients' treatment plans is a cost-effective way to prevent health care dollars from being used on medications that are not effective. It also prevents patients from a prolonged sequence of treatments that include making multiple visits to their physician and spending money on prescription medications that are not effective.

Another issue that is closely akin is prior authorization barriers that are designed to impede payment or control utilization of medically necessary procedures. For your review we have provided Addendum B- Consensus Statement on Improving the Prior Authorization Process for your review and hope that this committee will consider adding language to prevent and protect patients and physicians from prior authorization policies designed solely to add administrative burden, and hamper effective and timely patient care.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this important public health issue and have attached Addendum A- CMS Policy and letter to Medicare Advantage plans highlighting proper policy with regard to step therapies.

We urge your support for RB 36 and appreciate your time and consideration on this important piece of legislation. As physicians, our number one priority is the health and welfare of our patients. This legislation will improve access to prescription medications that are in the best interest of the patient.