



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SUPPORTING THE

# SAFE STEP ACT



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# WHAT IS STEP THERAPY?



## USED BY HEALTH PLANS

Step therapy is a tool used by health plans to control spending on patient's medications.



## NEGATIVE IMPACT

While step therapy can be an important tool to contain the costs of prescription drugs, in some circumstances, it has negative impacts on patients, including delayed access to the most effective treatment, severe side effects, and irreversible disease progression.



## IGNORES PATIENTS

This protocol is known as "step therapy" or "fail first." Step therapy protocols may ignore a patient's unique circumstances and medical history.



## FAILS TO ADDRESS

That means patients may have to use medications that previously failed to address their medical issue, or – due to their unique medical conditions – could have dangerous side effects.





# WHAT IS THE SAFE STEP ACT?



**THE SAFE STEP ACT  
IMPROVES STEP  
THERAPY PROTOCOLS  
AND ENSURE PATIENTS  
ARE ABLE TO SAFELY  
AND EFFICIENTLY  
ACCESS THE BEST  
TREATMENT.**



## **ESTABLISHES A CLEAR EXEMPTION PROCESS:**

The Safe Step Act requires insurers implement a clear and transparent process for a patient or physician to request an exception to a step therapy protocol.



## **OUTLINES 5 EXCEPTIONS TO FAIL FIRST PROTOCOLS:**

1. Patient already tried and failed on the required drug.
2. Delayed treatment will cause irreversible consequences.
3. Required drug will cause harm to the patient.
4. Required drug will prevent a patient from working or fulfilling Activities of Daily Living
5. Patient is stable on their current medication.



## **REQUIRES A GROUP HEALTH PLAN RESPOND TO AN EXEMPTION REQUEST**

within 72 hours in all circumstances, and 24 hours if the patient's life is at risk.

# TAKE ACTION

## SUGGESTED ADVOCACY TALKING POINTS

As you contact offices, use the template below as a reference to speak with the health staffer or if you would like to leave a voicemail/email. Please also attach the DDNC's White Paper on Cost-Shifting Tactics to your outreach email.



### 3 BEST WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE



### DDNC'S VIRTUAL PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

Attend the DDNC's Virtual Public Policy Forum from March 6th to March 8th [Public Policy Forum \(ddnc.org\)](http://ddnc.org).



### CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Identify your Representative in the House and your two Senators in the Senate. You can find your House Representative [here](#) and your Senators [here](#).



### CONTACT JACKSON RAU

If you need assistance, please reach out to Jackson Rau at [Rau@hmcw.org](mailto:Rau@hmcw.org) to request your legislators' health staffer email and to see whether or not your legislators currently co-sponsor the Safe Step Act.

#### Compose New Message

To: [Your Congressional Representative's Health Staffer]

Subject: Pass the Safe Step Act

A Normal text Bold Italic Underline

Hello/Dear [Health Staffer's Name],

My name is [Your Name] and I am a constituent of [Your House Rep. or Senator's Name] from [Your Hometown]. I am urging Congress to pass the Safe Step Act, HR 2163 and S 464, to limit the practice of step therapy, by the end of the year.

[Briefly explain your concerns and story about step therapy if applicable]

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation. I have attached a document on cost-shifting tactics explaining how step therapy impacts patient access to appropriate care and treatments.

Please tell me how the [Rep. or Senator] has responded to my request.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, Phone Number, and Email Address]

Attachment

Drop files here to upload

Send

Discard



# HOW TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

## SUGGESTED SOCIAL STRATEGY:

During the DDNC's Public Policy Forum, it's important to advocate on social media in support of the Safe Step Act. Now more than ever, grassroots advocacy is built through social media as well as the other standard formats. Below are a handful of example social media posts to help show your support for this important legislation.



**#steptherapy** is a harmful insurance practice for millions of patients living with chronic diseases. The **#safestepact #S464 #HR2163** will help patients by putting the prescribing back in the hands of patients and doctors.

12K 12K 12K



**#Steptherapy** impacts multiple disease states and we are supporting the **#SafeStepAct** to get patients the right medication at the right time.

12K 12K 12K



Innovative treatments can help slow disease progressions for those living with [INSERT YOUR COMMUNITY] and millions of patients living with numerous other chronic diseases. That's why it is so important to have access to incredible scientific innovations so that patients can live full, productive and active lives. But the insurance practice called **#steptherapy** is a barrier to that access. Patients and their doctors shouldn't have to jump through hoops to get the medicine they know will work best. Passing the **#safestepact #S464 #HR2163** will enable doctors and patients to get access to the medicines they need in a timely fashion.



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