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February 7, 2020

Representative Patricia A. Serpa  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
194 Kimberly Lane  
West Warwick, RI 02893

Dear Representative Serpa,

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) is the world's largest neurology specialty society, representing over 36,000 neurologists and clinical neuroscience professionals, including those in the state of Rhode Island. The AAN is strongly committed to high-quality accessible care for patients with neurologic conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, ALS, multiple sclerosis, and headache. For many of these patients there is often no "one size fits all" course of treatment. Prompt access to prescribed care is essential to minimize risks of dangerous complications and side effects.

As drug prices increase, access to needed therapies is often restricted as insurers and payers adopt practices like Step Therapy that limit choice and interfere with treatment choices carefully made between physicians and patients.

Under current Step Therapy protocol, patients with neurologic disorders may risk disease progression or be forced to take a drug with unacceptable side effects. We support policy improvements to ensure that patients and their doctors receive timely responses from health plans. We also support Step Therapy exceptions to protect patient access to effective treatments. Appropriate exceptions will ultimately help reduce health care costs by preventing irreversible disease progression and adverse side-effects that put patients at risk leading to more health care services. Reforms to Step Therapy will help preserve the doctor-patient relationship, while ensuring patients have access to the treatments that fit their unique medical history.

Thank you for considering the concerns of the Rhode Island neurology community on this important issue. If you have any questions or request additional information, please contact Becky Wifstrand, Health Policy Manager, at [bwifstrand@aan.com](mailto:bwifstrand@aan.com).

Sincerely,

James C. Stevens, MD, FAAN  
President, American Academy of Neurology