

HB2157 – Step Therapy  
February 2, 2021  
Testimony of Teresa L Carter

Chair Landwehr and Vice Chair Aplee and Committee Members

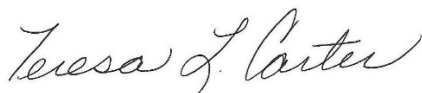
As a parent of a child with mental illness I strongly urge you to support HB2157 on Step Therapy.

This bill will ensure that the medicine and treatments prescribed by my daughter's mental health care providers will be administered without external interference by insurance providers. The treatment of mental health is not as easy as treating a broken leg or taking out an appendix. Unfortunately figuring out the right meds for a person with mental illness is a highly educated and calculated guessing game. When a person such as my daughter, who suffers from bipolar and schizophrenia, is prescribed a medication to help with the mood swings and voices she hears, it is done by a mental health care provider who has evaluated her and is educated in the exact medication they think will help her. Mental health meds, unlike antibiotics, take weeks or months to be totally effective. So, when she is prescribed a regimen designed by her mental health care doctors, and then it is circumvented by a "clerk" at the insurance company that says she must "fail" on a cheaper medicine first before getting what was prescribed it is a failure in her care and sets her back even further.

In my opinion I believe that step therapy as controlled by the insurance carrier is nothing short of medical abuse!

In my own healthcare, I was told I had to take two pills for high blood pressure, instead of the one combined coated pill because it was cheaper. I had to fail on it first and then my doctor could petition to have the more expensive one issued. So, I got the two required ones as part of step-therapy. Neither pill was coated causing me to throw up every time I took them. For several months as I appealed the decision of the "clerk" at the insurance companies' my high blood pressure was basically left untreated. Although I was lucky enough not to have a stroke while appealing, I have no idea what the long-term effects were on my kidneys.

For the health of our children who fight the diseases of mental illness and for those of us who are forced to take less effective medication for the benefit of the insurance companies I implore you to support HB 2157.



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