



February 3, 2021

Kansas House of Representatives  
Health and Human Services Committee  
RE: Testimony in support of HB 2157

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2157.

The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary health organization in the United States. For more than 110 years, the Lung Association has been working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The Lung Association works on behalf of the 37 million Americans living with lung diseases, including the more than 380,000 patients with lung disease in Kansas.

Ensuring that lung disease patients have quality and affordable healthcare is a main priority for the American Lung Association. The Lung Association strongly believes that clinical care for lung disease patients should follow evidence-based guidelines including the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) guidelines, the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) guidelines, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) guidelines for lung cancer treatment. However, coverage restrictions like step therapy can impede access to guidelines-based care.

Step therapy can make it difficult for patients to get medications to help them breathe or treat life-threatening conditions like lung cancer. Patients need to be able to receive the medications and other treatments that their medical providers believe would be best for them, not be forced to cycle through potentially less effective or ineffective treatments. Navigating burdensome step therapy processes can also be challenging for both patients and providers. This can lead patients to delay or discontinue treatment, which ultimately leads to higher health care costs.

The Lung Association supports the improvements that HB 2157 will make to the step therapy process for patients, a pathway for patients to request exemptions from step therapy protocols, includes key conditions that automatically qualify patients to override step therapy protocol such when the patient has tried the protocol drug and it was unsuccessful and when the patient's current medical pathway is successful or trending positive and the step therapy protocol would hinder that success or cause a negative outcome.

HB 2157 is critical to ensuring patients have access to quality medicine and treatment prescribed from their doctors without external interference by insurance providers. The American Lung Association urges the Committee to support HB 2157 to increase protections for patients during the step therapy process and improve access to evidence-based treatment for lung disease patients. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Sara Prem  
Advocacy, Specialist  
American Lung Association in Kansas and Greater Kansas City

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<sup>1</sup> National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, Third Expert Panel on the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma. Bethesda (MD): National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (US); 2007 Aug. Accessed at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7222/>; Global Strategy for the Diagnosis, Management and Prevention of COPD, Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) 2017. Available from: <http://goldcopd.org>; National Comprehensive Cancer Network, NCCN Guidelines. Accessed at: [https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician\\_gls/default.aspx#site](https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/default.aspx#site)