

**Please SUPPORT SB 421 to maintain doctor-patient autonomy and curb bureaucratic rationing of life-saving prescription medicines.**

In a clinical setting, medicine is traditionally practiced by a doctor diagnosing a patient's illness and then working directly with a patient to decide a course of therapy, including prescribing the proper medicine to treat the illness.

**Step therapy**, a form of rationing also known as "Fail First," is an approach—**employed by some insurance companies**—to paying for prescription drugs, which seeks to curb some initial costs by paying for the least expensive drug, then, if that drug fails to help the patient, the next least expensive drug is given to the patient, and so on, until the patient is given the treatment that works.

Even if a doctor has prescribed a more effective treatment, step therapy protocols mandate that only the cheaper drug, rather than the most effective therapy, will be covered when a prescription is filled. **This rationing often results in patients not receiving timely or effective treatments, and can lead to patients receiving entirely different formulas within the same drug class.**

While the least expensive drug *may* be effective for some patients, the process of getting to the correct drug prescribed by a physician may ultimately be more costly to the patient in wasted time and therapy, which may not be effective in treating their illness. **Step therapy can be especially harmful to patients in sensitive populations, such as those with Epilepsy and mental illness.**

**The main goal of step therapy is to contain cost; not patient safety.** Insurance companies are increasing their use of this method of denying care to patients, through these extreme cost control measures.

SB 421 seeks to maintain the doctor-patient relationship by allowing physicians to bypass bureaucratic decisions by insurance companies, by providing a clear process to grant an override of step therapy programs, when such programs are shown to be ineffective in the treatment of an insured patient's disease or medical condition.

**Please support patient access to medical care and life-saving medications, and the doctor-patient relationship over bureaucratic rationing, and:**

**Vote FOR SB 421**