

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW YORK PATIENTS GAIN BETTER ACCESS TO CRITICAL MEDICATIONS

*Nearly 80 patient and provider organizations thank Governor Cuomo
for signing step therapy reform into law*

(Albany, N.Y.) – Today, Governor Andrew Cuomo put the health of thousands of New York patients first by signing into law legislation designed to ensure better access to medications and curbing the insurance industry mandate known as step therapy or “fail first”.

The bill, (S.3419C/A.2834D) sponsored in the Senate by Senator Catharine Young and in the Assembly by Assemblyman Matthew Titone passed both chambers unanimously this past legislative session.

“Today marks a tremendous victory for patients and physicians all across New York,” said Kathleen Arntsen, President & CEO of Lupus and Allied Diseases Association. “Finally, the medical decisions that are so critical and personal to each of us will be placed back in the hands of our treating physicians and we will be better protected from unnecessary interference from insurers. Thank you Governor Cuomo for listening to us and understanding the importance of having timely access to proper treatment by putting patients first.”

Under step therapy patients are forced to try and fail on medications other than what their doctor has prescribed before an insurer will cover the cost of the originally recommended treatment. The new law will give doctors a transparent process to seek exceptions for patients needing a particular treatment. The bill does not ban step therapy or the number of steps an insurer can implement.

“We thank Governor Cuomo for seeking to address the concerns regarding step therapy protocols that had been raised by patients and physicians,” said Dr. Malcom Reid, President, Medical Society of the State of New York.

“Prioritizing insurance company profits over patients’ health is wrong. We applaud Governor Cuomo for taking another step to help cancer patients. By signing this bill to limit step therapy policies, the Governor is helping patients get access to the lifesaving medicine they need” said Julie Hart, Director of Government Relations, American Cancer Society Action Network (ACS CAN).

There has been a surge in the use of step therapy protocols in recent years. The insurance industry points to step therapy as a cost saver, but organizations across the state, dedicated to patient well-being have seen the negative effects step therapy has on individuals.

When applied inappropriately, patient health can be negatively impacted due to the delay in receiving the care they need.

Step therapy use is increasing steadily. In 2010, nearly 60% of commercial insurers were using step therapy. In 2012, 54% of plans reported using for drug to treat cancer, up from 36% in the prior year. Step therapy can affect a wide range of medical conditions, including but not limited to, auto-

immune diseases, cancer, mental health, and HIV/AIDS. Cases of step therapy have been documented in patients of all ages.

New York joins other states who have passed similar legislation this year, including Illinois, Indiana and Missouri.

S.3419C/A.2834D was supported by nearly 80 patient and provider organizations from across New York State and the nation.

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**Organizations Supporting S.3419C / A.2834D
Regulating the Use of Step Therapy**

Alliance for Patient Access
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Pain Management
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American Behcet's Disease Association
American Cancer Society (ACS)
American College of Rheumatology
American Lung Association
Arthritis Foundation
Association for Hispanic Mental Health Professionals
Association of Black Cardiologists
Bleeding Disorders Advocacy Network
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Epilepsy Association of Western New York
Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island
Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan New York
Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York
Epilepsy Foundation of Rochester/Syracuse/Binghamton
Epilepsy Society of Southern New York
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Harlem United
Hepatitis Foundation International
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic Health Network
Immune Deficiency Foundation
Institute for Community Living (ICL, Inc.)
International Foundation for Autoimmune Arthritis
International Institute for Human Empowerment
Latino Commission on AIDS
The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS)
Lupus Alliance of Long Island/Queens
Lupus Alliance of Upstate New York
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.

Lupus Foundation of Southern New York
Lupus Friends and Family Foundation
Lupus Research Alliance
Medical Society of the State of New York
Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.
Mental Health Association of Columbia/Greene Counties
Mental Health Association of Franklin County
Mental Health Association of Niagara County
Mental Health Association in Ulster County
NAACP New York State Conference
National Alliance on Mental Illness - New York State
National Alliance on Mental Illness - Queens/Nassau
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Infusion Center Association
NY Chapter National Multiple Sclerosis Society – New York MS Coalition Action Network
National Psoriasis Foundation
New York Association on Independent Living
New York BIO
New York Chapter of the American College of Physicians (NYACP)
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage
New York Oncology Hematology, P.C.
New York State Academy of Family Physicians
New York State Bleeding Disorders Coalition
New York State Osteopathic Medical Society
New York State Rare Disease Alliance
New York State Rheumatology Society
New York State Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery
NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
Northeast Kidney Foundation
Patient Services, Inc.
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
Scleroderma Foundation Tri-State Chapter
Sisterlink Collaborative, Inc.
Sjögren’s Syndrome Foundation
Susan G. Komen Central New York Affiliate
Susan G. Komen Greater New York City Affiliate
Susan G. Komen Northeastern New York Affiliate
Susan G. Komen Twin Tiers Region Affiliate
Susan G. Komen Western New York Affiliate
U.S. Pain Foundation
1 in 9 The Long Island Breast Cancer Action Coalition