



**Alliance for
Patient Access**

January 29, 2024

The Honorable Waylon Brown
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Cherielynn Westrich
Chair, Senate Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Mike Klimesh
Vice Chair, Senate Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

The Honorable Sara Trone Garriott
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce Subcommittee
Iowa State Capitol
1007 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50319

Re: Support for HF 626 - Non-Medical Switching

Dear Senator Brown, Westrich, Klimesh and Trone Garriott:

As Iowa clinicians and members of the Alliance for Patient Access, we are writing in support of HF 626. This bill would ensure continued patient access to appropriate medications by restricting the ability of insurance companies to implement negative formulary changes during the plan year. The restriction would apply only to patients already covered by the insurance company and already receiving coverage for their prescribed medications. Ensuring access to appropriate medication for patients should be a top priority as it promotes medical stability and, according to studies, may lower overall healthcare costs.

Founded in 2006, AfPA is a nonprofit, national network of clinicians dedicated to patient-centered care. AfPA advocates for health policies that support clinical decision-making, protect the provider-patient relationship and ensure patients' access to approved therapies and appropriate clinical care. AfPA also convenes an Iowa State Chapter, a group of Iowa health care providers that advocate for policies prioritizing patient-centered care.

Clinicians and patients work together, sometimes over a long period of time, to identify a treatment regimen that works best to manage their medical condition. Treatment decisions are based on a number of factors including the ability to slow disease progression, tolerance of side effects, co-morbidities and interaction with other medications the patient is taking, lifestyle factors, and other criteria. People with chronic conditions may take these treatments for an extended period, or possibly for life.

Iowans depend on their insurance coverage in order to access the medications they need and may choose plans based on prescription drug coverage. However, insurance companies regularly reduce coverage benefits for certain medications or remove them from their formularies altogether, even after they've previously agreed to cover the treatment. When these negative changes are made, the

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patient faces the choice to either pay increased out-of-pocket costs that can total hundreds or even thousands of dollars or abandon the treatment that has been keeping their condition stable and switch to an alternative treatment option. Unfortunately, this switch can lead to disease progression, symptom re-emergence or debilitating side effects.

HF 626 ensures that Iowans retain access to their essential medical treatments by restricting negative changes to a patient's formulary. To address the concerns of insurers, this bill has been amended to apply only to each plan year. This allows insurance companies to continue managing their formularies as they see fit in the long term, while also ensuring Iowa patients have access to the medications they were promised when choosing their health plan during the enrollment period. This bill simply protects Iowa's most vulnerable patients – those with lifelong, often debilitating conditions, who remain with the same insurance company and who continue to be prescribed a particular medication by their clinician throughout the plan year. On behalf of the Alliance for Patient Access, we would like to thank you for consideration on this important issue and urge you and fellow members to hear the bill in committee.

Sincerely,

Sakeer Hussain, MD
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Council Bluffs, IA

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Mercy Iowa City
Iowa City, IA

Lynn Rankin, MD
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