Chairman Ewing and members of the Senate State Affairs Committee,

For the record my name is Kristen Stiffler. I am the state government relations manager for the National Psoriasis Foundation. The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) represents 8.3 million Americans and roughly 21,000 South Dakotans living with psoriatic disease. I am also proud to represent a coalition of more than twenty patient and provider advocacy organizations known as the South Dakota Step Therapy Coalition. This coalition is comprised of organizations that represent individuals and providers in South Dakota that have been impacted by the practice of step therapy, and will be directly impacted by S.B. 155.

On behalf of the National Psoriasis Foundation and the Coalition, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of S.B. 155. This bill puts commonsense patient protections for the practice of step therapy for state regulated insurance plans.

Step therapy is an increasingly common practice utilized by insurers that requires a patient “step through” a series of medications before they will cover the medication originally prescribed by their physician. Step therapy can be detrimental for patients facing chronic, progressive, and complex conditions, such as psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, as it can lead to a patient’s inability to access appropriate treatments. Step therapy, when not medically appropriate, can result in delays of weeks, months or years before a patient get the medication originally prescribed by their doctor.

While step therapy is often an appropriate utilization tool it can be particularly difficult to apply towards a complicated heterogenous disease like psoriasis. Failure to take into consideration the unique nature of a disease like psoriasis can be detrimental for patients and can lead to:

- disease progression,
- higher overall costs of care,
- irreversible damage (specifically joint), or
- development of other comorbidities.

It is likely an individual with psoriasis will have at least 1 if not multiple significant comorbidities including: arthritis, cardiovascular disease, metabolic
syndrome (diabetes), inflammatory bowel disease and depression\textsuperscript{1}. These associated comorbidities emphasize the importance for tailored and efficacious treatment plans.

Having a clear process for doctors and patients to request an exception to a step therapy protocol will ensure that the doctor/patient relationship remains at the core of how medicine is practiced and that will allow patients to access the right medication in a timely fashion. S.B. 155 includes:

A clear process for a doctor or patient to request an exception to the step therapy protocol if at least one of the following criteria are met:

- Is contraindicated or will likely cause an adverse reaction of physical or mental harm,
- Is expected to be ineffective,
- Was previously tried and discontinued due to lack of effectiveness,
- Could worsen a comorbid condition, be ineffective to the patient's medical adherence or compliance,
- Decrease the ability to achieve or maintain functional ability in performing daily activities, or
- The patient is currently receiving a positive therapeutic outcome on a medication while under the patient’s current or previous health benefit plan.

S.B. 155 also includes a clear and timely process to receive an answer concerning the exception request – 72 hours for emergency situations and 5 calendar days for non-emergency situations. If no response is received, the decision is made in favor of the patient.

Today, I have provided the Committee with a folder of written testimony and information regarding S.B. 155. This morning, you will hear testimony from a patient and from a mother of a child who has experienced working through the step therapy process in South Dakota. We also have a doctor on the telephone line who will describe how a clear step therapy process in South Dakota will improve her ability to care for her patients.

Finally, I want to give a special thank you to Senator Langer for her leadership – She brought all stakeholders together, including the provider community, health plans, health systems and patient organizations to work on this important legislation that will put necessary patient protections in place and improve the step therapy process for South Dakotans.

The National Psoriasis Foundation and the South Dakota Step Therapy Coalition respectfully requests you vote S.B. 155 out of committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and I would be happy to assist with questions or information.