April 23, 2019

Representative Joseph M. McNamara, Chairman
House Committee on Health, Education & Welfare
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support HB 5806 (Serpa) – An Act Relating to Insurance – Accident and Sickness Insurance Policies – Step Therapy Protocols

Dear Chairman McNamara:

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is a non-profit, voluntary health agency dedicated to curing psoriatic disease and improving the lives of those affected. The Psoriasis Foundation is the leading patient advocacy group for the 8.3 million Americans and estimated 27,539 Rhode Island residents living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

Step therapy, also known as ‘fail first’, is a health insurance mandate that is intended to control spending on prescription drugs. This tool requires patients to ‘fail first’, often multiple times, on certain medications before they are able to receive the treatment originally prescribed by their physician. All too often, this delays access to optimal therapy, while potentially exacerbating a patient’s condition.

As a systemic disease associated with life-altering symptoms, the timely treatment of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis is of the utmost importance when managing long-term patient health. The Medical Board of the National Psoriasis Foundation recognizes the insurance companies’ need to keep costs down. However, the best interests of the patient must be the priority for both physicians and insurers alike.

The legislation before you ensures step therapy is based on the most current clinical data and that it is available to the consumer in a transparent manner. Furthermore, it outlines clear and concise exceptions to the step therapy protocols based on medical necessity. This legislation, which is not a ban, strikes a fair balance between cost containment and health of the patient.

When considering HB 5806 (Serpa) we ask that you support this legislation and vote it favorably out of committee. We appreciate your attention on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Randy Beranek
President and CEO

CC: House Committee on Health, Education & Welfare Members