Step Therapy and Psoriatic Disease

Experiences with Step Therapy: 2019 National Psoriasis Foundation Survey Results

In 2019, the National Psoriasis Foundation surveyed patients with psoriasis (PsO) and psoriatic arthritis (PsA) about the barriers to accessing treatment, including step therapy. We found that:

- 41% of PsO and PsA patients have experienced step therapy.
- 55% of requested exceptions were because they had already tried the same or a similar medication to the one required by step therapy.
- 48% of step therapy appeals were denied.

Despite many treatment options, it is a challenge to find a treatment that completely works for an individual patient, leading many patients to utilize multiple treatments to manage their disease.

What is Step Therapy?

Under step therapy, patients are required to try and fail one or more medications before being granted insurance coverage for the treatment originally prescribed by their health care provider.

Is there step therapy legislation?

Yes! There is state and federal legislation to create patient and provider friendly exceptions for step therapy. More info at: www.steptherapy.com.

Step Therapy for Specialty Medications in Commercial Health Plans*

Only 16% of health plans cover specialty medications (such as biologic drugs used to treat psoriatic disease) the same way. Of the many restrictions placed on specialty medications, step therapy accounts for 73.2%.

- An average of 1.5 steps is required per restricted specialty drug.
- 66% require 1 step.
- 20% require 2 steps.
- 14% require 3 steps.
- 33% of plans studied have more restrictive coverage than the FDA's indication for the medication.

*Chambers et al. July, 2018. Specialty Drug Coverage Varies Across Commercial Health Plans In The US. Health Affairs Pharmaceuticals and Medical Technology

For more information about the National Psoriasis Foundation, visit www.psoriasis.org