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Our mission is to save lives by meeting the most critical needs in our communities and investing in breakthrough research to prevent and cure breast cancer.

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Larry Crowder
Colorado General Assembly
200 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Re: HB18-1148 Concerning the Prohibition Against a Carrier Requiring Step Therapy for Covered Persons with Stage Four Advanced Metastatic Cancer - Support

Dear Senator Crowder,

Susan G. Komen Colorado® is proud to support HB18-1148. At Komen Colorado, we believe that all Coloradans deserve equal access to quality breast cancer care to reduce their risk of dying from this disease. We work to achieve this goal through our mission to save lives by meeting the most critical needs in our communities and investing in breakthrough research to prevent and cure breast cancer, with an emphasis on metastatic breast cancer.

HB18-1148 will prohibit a health plan from requiring a patient with stage four advanced metastatic cancer to undergo step therapy if the use of the approved drug is consistent with best practices for the treatment of stage four advanced metastatic cancer.

Step therapy, also referred to as "fail first", requires a patient to first try a preferred (often generic alternative) drug prior to receiving coverage for the originally prescribed drug. Step therapy is a method of utilization management that health plans employ to control costs by beginning treatment with a more cost-effective drug therapy and then progressing to the newer, more costly treatments only if necessary.

According to a study published in the American Journal of Managed Care, step therapy may create barriers for members to receive medication, and ultimately result in higher medical utilization costs. These protocols should optimize affordable, effective and appropriate access to care, not lead to delayed treatments, poor patient outcomes and increased medical costs. Unfortunately, most step therapy protocols rely on generalized information regarding patients and their treatments as opposed to considering unique patient experiences and responses to different treatments.

Currently, in the U.S. more than 154,000 people are living with metastatic breast cancer. Metastatic breast cancer is an advanced stage of breast cancer where tumor cells have spread to other parts of the body. Most breast cancer deaths are a result of metastasis.

Although metastatic breast cancer cannot be cured, it can be treated. Treatment is highly personalized and must be based on decisions made by the patient and their healthcare providers, as they are most capable in determining the appropriate treatment for patients.

To date, Komen has provided more than \$956M to researchers in 48 states and 21 countries to support research that has resulted in a better understanding of breast cancer; earlier detection; personalized, less invasive treatments for what was once a "one-treatment-fits-all" disease; and improvements in both quality of life and survival rates. Ensuring patients are receiving consistent and effective treatments is even greater in situations when treating patients with potentially life ending diseases such as metastatic breast cancer, any delays or deviations could be deadly.

Patients and physicians should have the opportunity to choose the best therapy without the burden of overly restrictive cost containment policies. For this reason, Susan G. Komen Colorado supports HB18-1148, and urge your support on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren".

Lauren Schwartz,
President of the Board
Susan G. Komen Colorado