



February 3, 2021

Chair, Senator Nancy Barto
Vice-Chair, Senator Tyler Pace
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Arizona State Senate
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee,

The Arizona Clinical Oncology Society (TACOS) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) are pleased to strongly **support SB 1270: Insurance; Prescription Drugs; Step Therapy**. This measure creates a time-sensitive step therapy protocol exemption process that would help protect cancer patients from delays in care.

TACOS is the largest oncology professional organization in the state representing a community of oncologists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other allied health professionals who provide a powerful voice for multidisciplinary cancer care teams and the patients they serve. ASCO is a national organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 45,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that cancer patients have meaningful access to high quality cancer care.

TACOS and ASCO are committed to supporting policies that reduce cost while preserving quality of cancer care; however, it is critical that such policies be developed and implemented in a way that does not undermine patient access. Payer utilization management approaches like step therapy protocols are of particular concern because they represent greater likelihood of raising barriers to appropriate care for individuals with cancer. While many treatments preferred by payers are less costly financially, they may not be the best treatment available for the patient. Step therapy or fail first policies can be problematic for patients with cancer because they can severely delay a patient's access to the best treatment available for their condition. While waiting to complete a "step," a patient with cancer may experience disease progression and irreversible damage to their overall health.

As a manner of placing guardrails around step therapy, **TACOS and ASCO are pleased that SB 1270 would:**

- **Enhance clinical validity** by requiring insurers to cite evidence-based, peer-reviewed literature in their written rationale for any denial;
- **Accommodate the needs of special patient populations** by requiring insurers to take atypical patient populations and diagnoses like cancer into account in their clinical review criteria;
- **Provide a clear and transparent process to request an exemption** for medications submitted for step therapy review; and

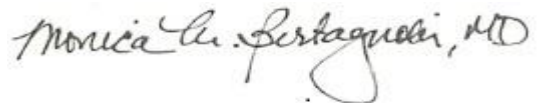
- **Establish a concise time frame** of 72 hours for review of patient and provider requests and 24 hours for requests under exigent circumstances.

TACOS and ASCO are encouraged by the steps that SB 1270 takes toward improving step therapy procedures in Arizona. We therefore urge the Senate Committee to pass this measure. Please contact Allison Rollins at ASCO at allison.rollins@asco.org or Dr. Seetharam at TACOS at seetharam.mahesh@mayo.edu if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mahesh Seetharam', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mahesh Seetharam, MD, FACP, MBBS
President
The Arizona Clinical Oncology Society

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Monica Bertagnolli, MD', written in a cursive style.

Monica Bertagnolli, MD, FACS, FASCO
Chair of the Board
Association for Clinical Oncology