



August 11, 2023

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
U.S. Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maggie Hassan  
U.S. Senate  
324 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Marshall, M.D.  
U.S. Senate  
479A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jacky Rosen  
U.S. Senate  
713 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Murkowski, Hassan, Marshall, and Rosen:

On behalf of the more than 87,000 members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), I would like to express our strong support for the *Safe Step Act* (S. 652). This important legislation would require group health plans to establish a clear and transparent exception process for medication step therapy protocols, helping to ensure that patients can safely and efficiently access the medications they need.

Step therapy establishes a specific sequence in which medications are covered by a group health plan or health insurance issuer in order to control spending on prescription drugs. Under step therapy protocols, patients may be required to try different medications and treatments before their insurer will cover the drug originally prescribed by their physician. While step therapy can be an important tool to contain the cost of prescription drugs, in some circumstances, it has negative impacts on patients, including delayed access to the most effective treatment, severe side effects, and irreversible disease progression.

ACS has long supported policies that improve surgical patient care, lessen administrative burdens, and streamline clinical workflow. The *Safe Step Act* will put health care decisions where they should be: in the hands of patients and their doctors. This legislation accommodates insurance companies wishing to include step therapy protocols in their plan design; it simply establishes common-sense guardrails to ensure that the tool is used judiciously and that patients can access appropriate treatments without unnecessary delay.

Thank you for your efforts and leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to ensure enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Turner", written over a thin horizontal line.

Patricia L. Turner, MD, MBA, FACS  
Executive Director & CEO

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