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Statement by Lora Pellegrini, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, on Step Therapy Legislation
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“Health plan medical management tools, like step therapy, encourage prescribers to recommend prescription drugs that are safe, clinically appropriate, and cost effective. Step therapy protocols are used in limited circumstances, such as before prescribing certain drugs that could pose safety or clinical concerns or have significantly higher costs for members and the health plan.

We appreciate that the Legislature has not banned step therapy, as proposed by the pharmaceutical industry, which would take away critical tools that health plans need to ensure patient safety and control costs and do little to address underlying prescription drug cost growth. As the Health Policy Commission found in its most recent Health Care Cost Trends Report, pharmacy spending grew by 8.6 percent in 2020 alone, and continues to be among the highest driver of health care costs in Massachusetts, significantly impacting the state’s ability to meet the Health Care Cost Growth Benchmark.

MAHP and our member plans agree that health plan members should not be required to repeat a medication that is unsafe or ineffective if they change health plans and has supported proposals to ensure continuity of care. However, HB 4929 goes beyond that and impacts the health plans’ ability to lower prescription drug costs and ensure patient safety. When prescription drug costs continue to be a significant health care cost driver, now is not the time to limit health plan's ability to lower costs and keep members safe.”

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