

Maryland House Bill 1359
Remarks of Lisa Albany
On behalf of the American Academy of Dermatology Association
February 27, 2020

Thank you Chair Pendergrass, and members of this committee, for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1359. My name is Lisa Albany, and I live in Edgewater, Maryland. I am the director of state policy for the American Academy of Dermatology Association. The Academy has 400 dermatologists in Maryland, and nearly 14,000 in the United States.

Dermatologists diagnose and treat more than 3,000 diseases, including skin cancer, psoriasis, immunologic diseases and many genetic disorders. As physicians who are on the front lines fighting skin cancer and treating numerous skin diseases, the Academy believes amended **House Bill 1359 will strengthen existing Maryland law to ensure that patients can access the therapies prescribed by their physician.**

Dermatologists who express their frustration with step therapy have referred to their prescription pads as “suggestion pads” due their inability to prescribe the medications they deem to be in the best interest of their patients.

Step therapy has shown to have a negative impact on patients, including delayed access to the most effective treatment, disease progression, and significant burdens on health care providers and their patients, as well as increases in health care costs.

This legislation, which expands the protections in existing law, is a common-sense approach. Health insurers would be required to grant a step therapy exceptions request if, in the professional judgment of the prescribing physician, the step therapy requirement would be medically inappropriate for that patient.

For the past 5 years, the Academy has been working closely with dermatologists around the country and many of the organization represented here today to pass step therapy reform. To date, 26 states have enacted step therapy reforms.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. I would be happy to follow-up with examples from our dermatologists of the medical exemptions included in this bill.

We urge members of this Committee for a favorable vote.