



**Written Testimony in Support of SB 93**  
**Submitted to the Senate Health and Public Welfare Committee**  
**February 25, 2019**  
**By the Susan G. Komen® Kansas & Western Missouri Affiliate**

Chairwoman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of SB 93, which would protect against step therapy protocols for patients. My name is Peggy Johnson, and I am a member of the Board of Directors for the Kansas & Western Missouri Affiliate of Susan G. Komen®.

Komen believes health decisions should always be between a patient and their provider. These decisions depend on many factors such as age, type of cancer and the characteristics of the disease. Deciding on a particular treatment option is as much a personal matter as it is a medical one. People who are fighting cancer should have the opportunity to choose the best therapy without the burden of overly restrictive cost containment policies.

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 employed to control costs by beginning treatment with a cheaper drug therapy (often not as effective) and then progressing to the newer treatment, only if necessary.

Preventing breast cancer patients from receiving the most effective therapy from the beginning of their treatment plan can further compromise their outcomes. Additionally, studies have shown the ‘fail first’ option *results in much higher healthcare costs*. In plans that currently utilize these protocols, it has been found that *53 percent of patients* whose oncology medications were rejected because they did not meet step therapy requirements did not receive another drug within the recommended 30-day window. Timing of treatment is critical in the treatment of cancer. Anyone diagnosed with breast cancer should never be forced to delay the recommended, or most effective treatment, due to insurance design or cost-containment strategies, especially when we know that breast cancer becomes five times more expensive to treat once it has spread beyond the breast. In many cases cancer treatment will include ‘quality of life’ drugs to help patients tolerate the chemotherapy side effects. These drugs allow patients to be able to stay on their recommended treatment. However, these drugs are often caught in the ‘fail first’ cycle and may cause a patient to simply stop treatment because of side effects.

To ensure patients and their physicians can choose the most appropriate and effective course of treatment for them, Susan G. Komen advocates **against** policies that increase insurance barriers precluding physician decision making, and placing unnecessary burdens on accessing care, including step therapy protocols.

Our Affiliate has long been dedicated to the fight against breast cancer right here in Kansas. **As committed partners in improving the outcomes for those diagnosed with breast cancer, we know how deeply important it is for all cancer patients to have fair and equal access to the therapies that may save their lives. As such, we testify today in favor of SB 93 and we urge you to support this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.**

**Susan G. Komen Kansas & Western Missouri Affiliate**  
**Board Member**