During the Safe Step Act Ad Hoc Coalition call in September, we decided to pursue 218 co-sponsors for the House bill – HR 2163 – by the end of the month. The number 218 came from a leader in the Education & Labor (E&L) Committee who suggested the committee acts on bills with 218 co-sponsors. The timing will strengthen the coalition’s follow-up with the E&L committee when Congress reconvenes after the November elections.

As of this writing, HR 2163 has 182 co-sponsors – we need all hands on deck to secure 36 more! Below are resources, ideas, and draft copy for your organization to participate in recruiting additional co-sponsors.

Resources:

- List of HR 2163 co-sponsors
- Safe Step Act flyer
- Map of states that have passed step therapy reform laws

Ideas for engagement:

- Follow up on lobby days
- Meet with your organization’s congressional champions
- Send action alerts to your constituents
- Social media

Sample Copy:

As always, please feel free to adjust the copy to fit your organization’s situation and style! We provide the following sample copy in the pages below. In general, when contacting congressional staff, we recommend contacting the person that handles health care.

- Follow up on lobby days
  - Sample email to congressional staff
  - Sample email to participants
- Meet with your organization’s congressional champions
  - Sample email to congressional staff
- Send action alerts to your constituents
  - Link to generic action alert
  - Sample copy for action alert
  - Sample ‘take action’ email to constituents
- Social media
Follow up on lobby days

- **Sample email organizations/lobbyists can send to congressional staff:**

Hi [First Name] – Thank you for meeting with constituents [names] during the [organization] lobby day in [month]. I write to follow up on that meeting to encourage your boss to co-sponsor HR 2163, the Safe Step Act.

Insurance-mandated step therapy is when a health plan requires patients to try and fail on insurer-preferred medications before the plan will cover the treatment initially selected by the patient and their provider. When medically inappropriate, step therapy can delay patient access to needed care, and result in severe or irreversible health outcomes. Recent studies show -

- Plans apply step therapy to almost 40% of drug decisions, and half of those protocols are not aligned with clinical guidelines (Lenahan, Health Affairs, 2021).
- Step therapy is associated with $90 billion in annual costs to the health system (Howell, Health Affairs, 2021).

The Safe Step Act is based on laws passed in [over 30 states] and would ensure that patients and their providers can seek an expedient exception to a medically inappropriate step therapy protocol. It would:

- Ensure employer health plans offer a step therapy exceptions process
- Require plans to respond to a step therapy exceptions request within 24-72 hours
- Establish circumstances when a plan should grant an exception request

Thank you for your consideration to co-sponsor HR 2163/S 464, the Safe Step Act. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this bill further or provide any additional information. Please keep me updated on your decision.

- **Sample email organizations/lobbyists can send to lobby day participants:**

Dear Advocates – Thank you for participating in our lobby day in [month]! Congress only has 3 months left in the session to advance legislation. We need your help to ask your legislators to take action on the Safe Step Act!

Our goal is to secure 218 House co-sponsors for HR 2163, the Safe Step Act by the end of October. This way, when Congress reconvenes in November, we’ll have the numbers behind us to encourage them to advance the bill before the end of the year. Here’s how you can help:

1. Please email the staff person you met in your House Representative’s office. A draft email is below.
2. If you don’t have the staff’s contact information anymore, then please participate in this [action alert].
Here is a sample message you can send:

Dear [First Name] – Thank you again for meeting with me in [month]. I am a resident of
[town]. I write to follow up on our meeting to encourage your boss to co-sponsor HR
2163, the Safe Step Act. This bill would help patients get timely access to the care they
need by ensuring that employer health plans offer an expedient step therapy exceptions
process.

[Share your story about why this bill is important to you and/or your community]

Thank you for your consideration of HR 2163, the Safe Step Act. I hope your office will co-
sponsor this bill, please keep me updated!

Tips and tricks:
• Adding your story to your email or action alert message will make it stronger
• Let us know if you’d like help finding the staff’s email in your Representative’s office

Thank you for following up on the Safe Sep Act this month to help us get to 218 by Halloween!
Meet with your organization’s congressional champions

- Sample email organizations/lobbyists can send to congressional staff

Hi [First Name] – Thank you for your ongoing support for the [name your disease, specialty, etc.] community. I write to request a meeting with you to discuss HR 2163, the Safe Step Act. Would you have a moment to touch base on the bill on either [suggest date/time options]? Given your boss’s support for our community, we’d be thrilled for you to co-sponsor the Safe Step Act. This bill would bolster timely patient access to care by ensuring employer health plans offer an expedient and medically reasonable step therapy exceptions request.

Step therapy is used by health plans to require patients to try and fail on insurer-preferred medications before the plan will agree to cover the treatment initially selected by the patient and their provider. When medically inappropriate, the delays caused by step therapy can lead to severe or irreversible health outcomes.

Thanks for your consideration of the Safe Step Act. Please let me know if you’d be willing to meet to discuss it further!
Send action alerts to your community

- **Link to a generic action alert on the Safe Step Act:**

  Link: [https://www.votervoice.net/NPF/Campaigns/98153/Respond](https://www.votervoice.net/NPF/Campaigns/98153/Respond)

  Please note that this link will show up on the National Psoriasis Foundation’s webpage.

- **Sample copy for an action alert:**

  **Title:**
  Ask Congress to support the Safe Step Act!

  **Description:**
  Step therapy, or fail first, is a health insurance protocol that requires patients try and fail on one or more medications before approving coverage for the treatment originally selected by the patient and their health care provider.

  The Safe Step Act would ensure that employer plans offer an expedient and medically reasonable step therapy exceptions process. This exceptions process would help patients skip medically inappropriate step therapy protocols and access the right treatment at the right time.

  Contact your member of Congress to tell them why the Safe Step Act is important to you!

  **Sample constituent message:**
  **Subject:** Please Co-Sponsor the Safe Step Act

  **Body:** As a constituent, I write to ask that you cosponsor the bipartisan S 464/HR 2163, the Safe Step Act.

  Under insurance-mandated step therapy, patients are required to try and fail on one or more medications before they are granted coverage for the drug originally selected by the patient and their health care provider. The delays caused by step therapy can result in severe or irreversible health outcomes.

  The Safe Step Act is based on legislation that has passed in over 30 states. It would ensure employer plans offer a medically reasonable and expedient step therapy exceptions process so that patients can skip the step therapy protocols that won’t work for them.

  I ask you to support federal step therapy reform by becoming a cosponsor of the Safe Step Act.
Sample ‘take action’ email that organizations/lobbyists can send to advocates:

Dear Advocate – We need your help! Congress only has 3 months left in the session to advance legislation, and we want them to act on the Safe Step Act. Please email your legislators today!

The Safe Step Act would help patients gain timely access to needed treatments by establishing guardrails around insurance-mandated step therapy. Step therapy is when a health plan requires patients to try and fail on insurer-preferred medications before the plan will agree to cover the treatment initially selected by the patient and their provider. Delays in care caused by step therapy can lead to severe or irreversible health outcomes.

Please help us advance the Safe Step Act this year by taking 2 minutes to email your legislators today.

Thank you!
Social Media

With many thanks to Jen Daly, we are able to provide the following samples for taking advocacy action on social media this month. These are included as separate attachments.

- State-specific toolkit referencing local patient stories:
  - Arizona
  - California
  - Connecticut
  - Florida
  - Georgia
  - Massachusetts
  - New York
  - North Carolina
  - Ohio
  - Texas
  - Wisconsin

- Clip packet with information on each of the cited stories from the states above

Best Practices – When posting on social media, make sure to:

- Tag legislators’ congressional handles
- Include the bill, #SafeStepAct
- Make an ask: i.e., “Please cosponsor”

We also have so many new co-sponsors to thank! We will circulate a ‘thank you’ template in November to celebrate everyone’s good (ghoulish?) deeds.