



## Step Therapy

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**Position:** The Epilepsy Foundation opposes step therapy and similar policies intended to restrict access to physician-directed care that unnecessarily prolong ineffective treatment, and prevent individuals from immediately starting the treatment their physicians think is best.

**About Epilepsy:** The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of more than 3 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime.

**Background:** Step therapy, or “fail first,” is a process used by insurance companies to require individuals who have been prescribed certain medications by their physician to try and fail one or more medications preferred by the insurer before receiving the medication prescribed by the individual’s physician.

There is no “one size fits all” treatment option for epilepsy, and the response to epilepsy medications can be different for each person. Maintaining seizure control with minimal side effects requires careful evaluation and monitoring by the physician and patient. To change, limit, or deny access to medications could be extremely dangerous and have serious consequences for the patient. People living with epilepsy who have their medications switched, or who experience a delay in accessing their medication, are at a high risk for developing breakthrough seizures and related complications including death. Limits to physician-directed care can also significantly increase medical costs related to preventable seizures, along with lost wages and productivity, not just for the individuals living with epilepsy but also their families and communities.

**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Angela Ostrom, Chief Legal Officer & Vice President Public Policy at [aostrom@efa.org](mailto:aostrom@efa.org) or 301-918-3766.**