

January 23, 2017

The Honorable John Hunt, Chairman
Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs
165 Sunridge Road
Rindge, NH 03461-5478

The Honorable Barbara Biggie, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs
Box 962
Milford, NH 03055-0962

Dear Chairman Hunt and Vice Chair Biggie:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation and the Epilepsy Foundation New England, we urge you to oppose House Bill 443, a bill referred to the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs. This bill prohibits prescription drug manufactures from offering copayment reimbursement and would limit access to care for those living with epilepsy.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of more than three million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. Together 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. For the majority of people living with epilepsy, epilepsy medications are the most common and most cost effective treatment for controlling and/or reducing seizures.

This legislation seemingly is the result of unfounded concerns that copayment reimbursements by prescription drug manufactures incentivize physicians to prescribe more expensive drugs; however, this is an inappropriate assumption, especially in relation to epilepsy. Epilepsy medications are not interchangeable and treatment of epilepsy is highly individualized. There is no “one size fits all” treatment option for epilepsy, and the response to medications can be different for each person. Maintaining seizure control with minimal side effects requires careful evaluation and monitoring by physicians and their patients. Selection of the appropriate medication to prevent seizures is determined by a number of variables, including type of seizure, seizure frequency, age, gender, and other health conditions. The treating physician is in the best position to make the judgment about which medication is most appropriate.

It is beneficial, and at times critical, to our community that individuals are able to receive copayment reimbursements. Prescription drug manufacturers offer copayment reimbursements to individuals who may be struggling to afford their medications for various reasons, and while the Epilepsy Foundation advocates for policies that support meaningful access to medications and treatment for epilepsy, which often includes issues of affordability, unfortunately, there are still many challenges related to meaningful access. Many individuals are not able to afford their medications, even with insurance coverage, and copayment assistance programs play a critical role in ensuring they can gain and maintain seizure control. 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 on access also can lead to significantly increased 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.

The Epilepsy Foundation and Epilepsy Foundation New England urge you to oppose HB 443. Please do not hesitate to contact Bill Murphy, Director, Advocacy and Public Policy at Epilepsy Foundation New England at 617-506-6041, ext. 104 or wmurphy@epilepsynewengland.org with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Susan Linn
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation New England



Philip M. Gattone, M.Ed.
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation, National Office

cc:

Valerie Fraser – Clerk

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Laurie Sanborn

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Richard Abel

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