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May 20, 2020

Dear Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate:

Re: Please Support SB 632 in Committee

The Association of Women in Rheumatology (AWIR) promotes the science and practice of Rheumatology, fosters the advancement and education of women in rheumatology, and advocates for access to the highest quality health care and management of patients with Rheumatic diseases. While there are no cures for Rheumatic diseases, medical research breakthroughs have led to treatments and therapies that can dramatically improve the quality of life for those living with rheumatic diseases.

AWIR advocates for medication access reforms at both the state and federal level; and currently has three (3) Local Chapters in North Carolina that are comprised of providers of rheumatology from across the state. To this end, we are writing in support of SB 632 for the reasons outlined below.

Insurers are currently implementing alternative cost-sharing structures known as “accumulator adjustment programs.” These programs prevent the value of co-pay assistance from being applied towards a patient’s deductible as an out-of-pocket expense which results in making treatments financially inaccessible for patients.

AWIR recognizes that co-pay assistance programs are not an ideal substitute to care that is affordable in the first place. However, co-pay assistance remains the only option many patients with chronic conditions have to afford their medically necessary treatments.

In addition, AWIR holds that PBMs should be held to a high standard of practice in order to conduct business in North Carolina. Implementing a state licensure requirement is vital in order to provide a minimum level of oversight to protect patient care.

SB 632 seeks to prevent negative health consequences for patients by requiring insurers to count any payments made by, or on behalf of a patient, to be counted towards their deductible. The bill also sets forth requirements for pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) licensure.

AWIR urges you to support SB 632 in Committee for the aforementioned reasons. Please contact AWIR’s Government Affairs Specialist at Heather.Kazmark@naylor.com with any questions. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Grace C. Wright, MD
President

