

We are now into the third month in the new year,  IAHSN's State Advocacy Relations team is preparing to kick off our state policy campaign. We are searching for patients and health care providers who can help us with our ambitious agenda: to improve access to treatments through policy changes.

**Step therapy**

Our first policy priority is passing legislation that provides an exemption process to step therapy. Known as “fail first” policy, step therapy is a tool frequently used by insurance companies that requires patients to try – and fail – on one or more medications before granting coverage for the treatment originally prescribed by their doctor. Patients are increasingly subjected to this process, hindering their ability to properly treat their disease. Eighteen states have already passed step therapy exemptions. We plan to continue the momentum and build on those successes.

IAHSN staff have identified 13 states for step therapy legislation: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah and Washington. If you would like to why doctors use Step Therapy.

**Out-of-pocket expenses**

Our second policy priority will address high out-of-pocket costs. Too often patients are unable to afford their treatments, forcing them to make tough decisions like sacrificing other expenses or abandoning treatment. We will target states for bills that will lower high treatment costs. Please email info@iahsn.org for details on how to get involved.

**Other ways to support our state efforts**

Patient advocacy is our third initiative, it can be as easy as sending a quick Twitter or Facebook post. You can craft letters or personally meet with your state lawmakers at the Capitol or their local office. Your attendance at a town hall meeting, bill hearing or an IAHSN Advocacy Day in your state is also extremely valuable. IAHSN team members work with each advocate individually to ensure you feel comfortable and are prepared to engage in one or all of these activities.

IAHSN will be developing an regional Advocacy Network f you’re looking for a higher level of engagement, you can join our regional Advocacy Networks. The networks will be composed of patients and health care providers trained in our policy priorities and kept up-to-date on all of our state activities through monthly conference calls and occasional emails. The Advocacy Networks will be designed to both regularly support and raise awareness of our advocacy efforts.

*If you would like to learn more about one or all of these advocacy initiatives, contact us at info@iahsn.org. The patient and provider voice is crucial to our success. You* can *make a difference!*