

August 8, 2018

Arthritis Foundation Statement on New Guidance Permitting the Use of Step Therapy in Medicare Advantage

The Arthritis Foundation released the following statement in response to the administration's decision to rescind 2012 guidance to Medicare Advantage plans that expressly prohibited the use of step therapy, and issue new guidance permitting step therapy for physician-administered drugs beginning on January 1, 2019:

"The Arthritis Foundation is disappointed by the administration's decision to permit the use of step therapy in Medicare Advantage plans. We are concerned this change could lead to treatment interruptions and cause irreparable harm for people with arthritis. It is critical that the administration gather robust patient input before taking these actions to ensure new policies will not have unintended consequences or adverse impacts to patient health.

Our [comments](#) to the administration last month emphasized that people with arthritis can face extraordinary challenges, including years of diagnostic testing; lifelong mobility issues; and co-morbidities ranging from diabetes to heart disease and depression. Accessing prescription drugs and treatments should not be one of those burdens. People with inflammatory forms of the disease often must try multiple medications before finding one that works for them, elevating the importance of protecting the patient-physician relationship in reaching shared treatment decisions.

We stand ready and willing to work with the administration on ways to make medications more affordable for patients in a way that does not compromise their health."

