

2016 Legislative Action Agenda

Make Your Voice Heard!!!

Regulate Step Therapy

New York State Legislative Bills NAMI-NYS is Supporting in 2016:

[S-3419A/A-2834A](#)

While NAMI-NYS was appreciative that the Legislature restored prescriber prevails in the final budget, we now must turn our attention to ensuring that private insurance providers cover medications prescribed by a doctor. This bill would increase a doctor's ability to override an insurance company's decision not to approve prescribed medication and only approve a less expensive option.

**Legislators to Target-Senate and Assembly Health and Insurance Committee
Members (highlighted legislators are bill sponsors):**

Health Committee: Chairs

Senator	Health, Mental Health	Kemp	Hannon	Garden City	(518) 4552200
Assemblymember	Health	Richard	Gottfried	New York	(518) 4554941

**Insurance
Committee:
Chairs**

Senator	Insurance, Health, Mental Health	James	Seward	Oneonta, Cortland & Herkimer	(518) 4553131
Assemblymember	Insurance, Health	Kevin	Cahill	Kingston	(518) 4554436

Assembly/Senate	Committee	First	Last	Area Represented	LOB Phone
Assemblymember	Health	Thomas	Abinanti	Tarrytown	(518) 4555753
Senator	Insurance	Tony	Avella	Bayside	(518) 4552210
Assemblymember	Insurance	William	Barclay	Fulton	(518) 4555841
Assemblymember	Insurance	Ken	Blankenbush	Carthage	(518) 4555797
Assemblymember	Health	Edward	Braunstein	Bayside	(518) 4555425
Senator	Insurance	Neil	Breslin	Albany	(518) 4552225
Assemblymember	Insurance	Marc	Butler	Herkimer	(518) 4555393
Assemblymember	Insurance, Health	Kevin	Cahill	Kingston	(518) 4554436
Senator	Insurance	David	Carlucci	Rockland	518-455-2991
Assemblymember	Health	Barbara	Clark	Queens Village	(518) 4554711
Assemblymember	Insurance	Vivian	Cook	Jamaica	(518) 4554203
Assemblymember	Insurance	Marcos	Crespo	Bronx	(518) 4555514
Assemblymember	Insurance	Brian	Curran	Lynbrook	(518) 4554656
Assemblymember	Insurance, Health	Steven	Cymbrowitz	Brooklyn	(518) 4555214
Assemblymember	Insurance	Erik	Dilan	Brooklyn	(518) 4555821
Assemblymember	Health	Jeffrey	Dinowitz	Bronx	(518) 4555965
Senator	Health	Hugh	Farley	Ballston Spa, Johnstown	(518) 4552181
Senator	Health, Mental Health	Simcha	Felder	Brooklyn	(518) 4552754
Assemblymember	Insurance	Gary	Finch	Auburn	(518) 4555878
Assemblymember	Health	Sandy	Galef	Ossining	(518) 4555348
Assemblymember	Health	Andrew	Garbarino	Bayport	(518) 4554611
Senator	Insurance, Health	Martin	Golden	Brooklyn	(518) 4552730
Assemblymember	Insurance, Mental Health	Phillip	Goldfeder	Rockaway Beach, Howard Beach	(518) 4554292
Assemblymember	Health	Andy	Goodell	Jamestown	(518) 4554511
Assemblymember	Health	Richard	Gottfried	New York	(518) 4554941
Assembly	Health	Aileen	Gunther	Sullivan	(518)-455-5355
Senator	Insurance	Jesse	Hamilton	Brooklyn	(518) 4552431
Senator	Health, Mental Health	Kemp	Hannon	Garden City	(518) 4552200
Senator	Health	Ruth	Hassell- Thompson	Bronx	(518) 4552061
Assemblymember	Insurance	Stephen	Hawley	Albion	(518) 4555811
Assemblymember	Health, Insurance	Andrew	Hevesi	Forest Hills	(518) 4554926
Senator	Health	Brad	Hoylman	New York	(518) 4552451
Assemblymember	Insurance	Pamela	Hunter	Syracuse	(518) 4555383
Assemblymember	Health, Mental Health	Ellen	Jaffee	Pearl River	(518) 4555118
Assemblymember	Insurance	Latoya	Joyner	Bronx	(518) 4555461

Senator	Insurance	Timothy	Kennedy	Buffalo	(518) 4552426
Senator	Insurance	Andrew	Lanza	Staten Island	(518) 4553215
Senator	Insurance, Health	William	Larkin	New Windsor	(518) 4552770
Senator	Insurance	George	Latimer	Port Chester	(518) 4552031
Senator	Insurance	Kenneth	LaValle	Mount Sinai	(518) 4553121
Assemblymember	Insurance, Health	Charles	Lavine	Glen Cove	(518) 4555456
Senator	Health	Betty	Little	Glens Falls, Plattsburgh	(518) 5612430
Senator	Insurance, Health	Jack	Martins	Mineola	(518) 4553265
Assemblymember	Health	Shelley	Mayer	Yonkers	(518) 4553662
Assemblymember	Health	David	McDonough	Bellmore	(518) 4554633
Senator	Health	Velmanette	Montgomery	Brooklyn	(518) 4553451
Assemblymember	Insurance	Francisco	Moya	Jackson Heights	(518) 4554567
Senator	Insurance, Health, Mental Health	Terrance	Murphy	Shrub Oak, Carmel	(518) 4553111
Senator	Insurance	Thomas	O'Mara	Elmira, Bath	(518) 4552091
Senator	Insurance	Marc	Panepinto	Buffalo	(518) 4552760
Senator	Insurance	Kevin	Parker	Brooklyn	(518) 4552580
Assemblymember	Health	Amy	Paulin	Scarsdale	(518) 4555585
Assemblymember	Insurance, Health	Crystal	Peoples-Stokes	Buffalo	(518) 4555005
Senator	Health, Social Services	Roxanne	Persaud	Brooklyn	(518) 4552788
Assemblymember	Insurance	J. Gary	Pretlow	Mt. Vernon	(518) 4555291
Assemblymember	Health	Edward	Ra	Garden City	(518) 4554627
Assemblymember	Health	Andrew	Raia	Northport	(518) 4555952
Senator	Health, Mental Health	Gustavo	Rivera	Bronx	(518) 4553395
Assemblymember	Insurance	Jose	Rivera	Bronx	(518) 4555414
Assemblymember	Health	Linda	Rosenthal	New York	(518) 4555802
Senator	Insurance	James	Sanders	South Ozone park, Far Rockaway	(518) 4553531
Assemblymember	Health	Robin	Schimminger	Kenmore	(518) 4554767
Senator	Insurance	Sue	Serino	Hyde Park, Putnam Valley	(518) 4552945
Assemblymember	Insurance	James	Skoufis	Chester	(518) 4555441
Senator	Health	Toby	Stavisky	Flushing	(518) 4553461
Assemblymember	Insurance, Health	Phil	Steck	Schenectady	(518) 4555931
Assemblymember	Health	Matthew	Titone	Staten Island	(518) 4554677
Senator	Health	David	Valesky	Syracuse	(518) 4552838
Senator	Insurance	Michael	Venditto	Massapequa	(518) 4553341
Assemblymember	Insurance, Health	Raymond	Walter	Williamsville	(518) 4554618
Senator	Health	Catharine	Young	Olean, Jamestown	(518) 4553563

Phone Message and Speaking Points on this Bill

Phone Message: My name is _____ and I'm calling Assemblymember/Senator _____ to urge them to support bill S-3419A/A-2834A which would regulate the dangerous procedure known as step therapy, where insurance companies refuse to cover medication a doctor prescribes and will only cover a less expensive option. I believe all medical decisions should be made by doctors based on a person centered approach and not by bureaucrats whose main concern is saving money and not saving lives.

Talking Points:

- People who have psychiatric disorders need to have access to the medications their doctor believes are the most appropriate for them.
- Anti-psychotic and anti-depressants are not interchangeable and prescribing someone with severe mental illness the wrong medication can be very dangerous.
- Improper use of medication can lead to negative and expensive outcomes such as emergency room visits, hospitalizations and possible entry into the criminal justice system. The most tragic results can include suicide.
- Prescribing the correct medication is the safest and most cost-effective option.

Letters to the Editor on Step Therapy Regulation

Along with meeting with you legislators there are other ways for you to project your advocacy voice. Letters to the editors of local newspapers can have a powerful impact and create more support in your community on behalf of the issues so important to NAMI-NYS. We are supplying you with templates for letters to editors on the behalf of the top four bills we support. Feel free to edit and personalize these letters to explain why they are important to you and your community. Please remember though these letters should not exceed 250 words.

Regulate Step Therapy:

Decisions on a person's medical care should be made by themselves and their doctor, based on what is believed to be most appropriate in advancing their recovery. Someone paying for medical insurance should expect their coverage to honor and subsidize the medication their doctor prescribed. However, too often decisions on what medications to cover are based on profit margins and not sound medical recommendations.

Many patients have been betrayed by their insurance providers who only approve to pay for less expensive options and making the patient demonstrate the failure of the covered medication before the providers allow them to "step-up" to the prescription their doctor originally wrote. This practice is both amoral and hazardous.

As a person living with a mental illness

(or)

As a family member of someone living with a mental illness,

I am particularly worried about this practice. People who have psychiatric disorders need to have access to the medications their doctor believes are the most appropriate for them. Anti-psychotic and anti-depressants are not interchangeable and prescribing someone with severe mental illness the wrong medication can be very dangerous. Improper use of medication can lead to negative and expensive outcomes such as emergency room visits, hospitalizations and possible entry into the criminal justice system. The most tragic results can include suicide.

A bill before the New York State Legislature S-3419A/A-2834A, would regulate the practice by making it easier for doctors to override insurance company's decision not to approve prescribed medication. I urge our representatives to support this bill.