

October 26, 2022

The Honorable Charles D. Baker, Jr.
Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
24 Beacon Street, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Please sign H.5358, *An Act Relative to Step Therapy and Patient Safety*, into law

Dear Governor Baker:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health (MAMH), I am grateful for your ongoing commitment to addressing the needs of people with behavioral health conditions and their families. Your Administration's leadership in developing and now implementing the Roadmap for Behavioral Health Reform, shaping and signing Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022, and prioritizing behavioral health in recent state budgets and American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) investments is making such a positive difference across the Commonwealth.

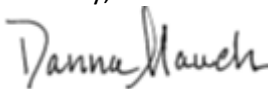
I write today to request that you please sign H.5358, *An Act Relative to Step Therapy and Patient Safety*, into law.

When individuals and their treatment teams identify a medication that advances positive health, functioning, and recovery, it is important to be able to access that treatment regimen. Finding the right medication for major depression, bipolar illness, schizoaffective disorder, or schizophrenia may take numerous trials involving several medications, as few drugs are effective with the majority of patients. As prescribers know, most psychotropic drugs are brought through the FDA process to market working for only a fraction of the target patient population. In addition, not all drugs advertised as equivalent are truly interchangeable due to both the complexity of psychopharmaceutical drugs as well as individual patient characteristics—age, gender, general health, and severity of illness—which determine individual patient responses.

Forcing patients through repeated treatment failures in step therapy puts patients and their families in a position in which they remain untreated and discouraged, with their functioning compromised and the risk of disability increasing.

Please sign H.5358, *An Act Relative to Step Therapy and Patient Safety*, into law. Should you have any questions or if MAMH can be a resource to your work, please don't hesitate to be in contact. Thank you again for your leadership, careful consideration, and hard work on these very important issues.

Sincerely,



Danna Mauch, PhD
President and CEO

c. The Honorable Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Tim Buckley, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor; Katherine Holahan, Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs, Office of the Governor; Bekah Diamond, Chief of Staff, EOHS; Lauren Peters, Undersecretary for Health Policy, EOHS; Robert McLaughlin, Legislative Director, EOHS