

STAGE FOUR ADVANCED, METASTATIC CANCER

STEP THERAPY

Fact Sheet | 2019

Step therapy, also referred to as “fail first”, requires a patient to first try a preferred (often generic alternative) drug prior to receiving coverage for the originally prescribed drug. Step therapy is a method of utilization management health plans employ to control costs by beginning treatment with a more cost-effective drug therapy and then progressing to the newer, more costly treatments only if necessary. Legislation can prohibit health plan companies from requiring enrollees to follow step therapy protocols for stage four advanced metastatic cancer and associated conditions.

Stage Four Advanced Metastatic Cancer Step Therapy

- Currently, in the U.S. more than 154,000 people are living with metastatic breast cancer. Metastatic breast cancer is an advanced stage of breast cancer where tumor cells have spread to other parts of the body. It is estimated that nearly all of the more than 42,000 breast cancer deaths expected this year will be a result of metastasis.
- Although metastatic breast cancer cannot be cured, it can be treated. Treatment is highly personalized and must be based on decisions made by the patient and their healthcare providers, as they are most capable in determining the appropriate treatment for patients. Unfortunately, most step therapy protocols rely on generalized information regarding patients and their treatments as opposed to considering unique patient experiences and responses to different treatments.
- To date, Komen has provided more than \$166 million in over 400 research grants to more than 40 clinical trials focused on metastatic breast cancer. This research has resulted in a better understanding of breast cancer and improvements in both quality of life and survival rates. Ensuring patients are receiving consistent and effective treatments is even greater in situations when treating patients with potentially life ending diseases such as metastatic breast cancer, any delays or deviations could be deadly.
- Patients and physicians should have the opportunity to choose the best treatments and therapies without the burden of overly restrictive cost containment policies.

Effective and Appropriate Coverage

- Physicians should not be forced to make decisions based on protocols that rely on generalized patient information as opposed to making decisions based on the unique needs of each patient.
- Patients and physicians should have the opportunity to choose the best therapy without the burden of overly restrictive cost containment policies.

Susan G. Komen® Greater Iowa urges Members of the Iowa Legislature to prohibit health benefit plans from requiring step therapy to treat stage four advanced, metastatic cancer and its associated conditions. Komen believes that everyone deserves equal access to quality treatment to reduce their risk of dying from this disease.

