

Remarks

Congressman Brad Wenstrup (R-OH-2)

“Member Day”

Full Committee Hearing

Education & Workforce Committee

10am, Friday, December 1, 2023

Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx, for hosting this member day hearing and for the opportunity to speak this morning.

The Education and Workforce Committee is vital to advancing policies that help students learn, workers succeed and job creators to thrive.

As a physician who serves in Congress, I am focused on ways that we, as members of Congress, can enact policies to make America the healthiest nation on the planet.

When we talk about health care, we should be discussing things that make Americans healthy and this Committee plays a vital role in that effort by overseeing programs that affect all Americans starting with early learning.

I appreciate the role this committee plays in education policy and look forward continuing to work with you all on ways to improve the education of Americans to keep our nation healthy.

One of my highest priorities in Congress is H.R. 2630, the Safe Step Act., which I have worked on for several years with my colleague Dr. Ruiz,

The Safe Step Act is based on state laws that have passed in 38 states, including my home state of Ohio, as well as North Carolina and Virginia.

This important bill would ensure that employer plans offer a medically reasonable and expedient step therapy exceptions process.

Currently, health plans, particularly self-insured employer plans that are exempt from state laws, require patients to try and fail on insurer-preferred drugs before

the plan will cover the treatment initially selected by the patient and their provider.

When medically inappropriate, such delays in care can lead to severe or irreversible consequences.

Earlier this year, I was proud to see the Safe Step Act favorably reported out of the Senate HELP committee as one of the only patient-driven bills under consideration.

A neurologist in my district says that 'time is brain' – which means that these delays result in some of his patients permanently losing their ability to walk – despite the availability of treatments that can help them.

In a nation that makes unprecedented investments in innovative treatments and cures and has the potential to offer the best health care in the world, these delays in care take us back to 50-years in progress.

Step therapy, when used inappropriately, disrupts the doctor-patient relationship by making it more difficult for a physician to prescribe the care their patient needs.

The Safe Step Act allows plans to continue to apply step therapy to drug decisions and ensures that plans allow patients and providers to access a quick exceptions process if a step therapy protocol is inappropriate for that patient.

I commend the Chairwoman for her support in addressing this bill, and the continued work of your committee staff, as well as all of my colleagues on the committee who have joined as co-sponsors. I look forward to seeing the Safe Step Act pass out of this committee.

Thank you once again for holding this Member Day Hearing, and I yield back.