

January 27, 2025



Good afternoon House IBL Committee members,

My name is Lucy Laube. I am the State Government Relations Manager for the Western Region of The National Psoriasis Foundation and I ask for your support of HB 1216, sponsored by Representative Karls. I also am a patient living with Crohn's disease and have relied on copay assistance to afford my life-saving medication for the past 9 years.

The National Psoriasis Foundation represents roughly 8 million Americans living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and who rely on high-cost specialty drugs. Many of these patients rely on copay assistance from drug manufacturers, charitable foundations and other third parties to afford the medications that they need. In fact, A 2020 National Psoriasis Foundation survey found that 70 percent of people with psoriatic disease who take a biologic reported they could not afford that medication without copay assistance.

In recent years, health insurers have begun implementing new programs called "copay accumulator adjustment programs" that do not count payments from copay assistance toward patients' deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums. This places an extreme financial burden on patients who are forced to pay out of pocket to reach their full deductibles or forego potentially life-saving treatments because they cannot afford it. In fact, studies have shown that patients are far more likely to abandon their treatment when out-of-pocket costs exceed \$100. This abandonment of treatment can lead to irreversible negative health outcomes to the patients.

HB 1216 will ensure patients continue to have access to their essential medications and stay on their treatment regime prescribed by their doctor by ending the practice of Copay Accumulator Adjustment Programs and requiring health insurance plans and PBM's to apply any amount paid by the insured patient through copay assistance to the patient's cost sharing obligations. There have been similar patient-friendly copay accumulator reform bills passed in 20 states and Puerto Rico already. We encourage North Dakota to join its west coast states in passing this legislation and be the 21st state with protections.

Sincerely,

Lucy Laube

State Government Relations Manager, Western Region