



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEWS: Legislation Introduced to Protect Patients' Access to Medications

SB 580 would keep patients stable on treatments prescribed by their physicians

AUSTIN, Texas – Today, Texas patient advocates thanked Senator Donna Campbell for introducing SB 580, a bill that would restrict non-medical switching and protect patients' access to the medications their physician prescribes.

[Non-medical switching](#) occurs when a health plan, in an effort to cut costs, drives stable patients to switch from their current medication to the health plan's preferred alternative. Non-medical switching can destabilize patients, who then face disease progression and new medical complications, symptom resurgence or side effects. This can lead to more doctor visits, trips to the emergency room and hospitalization, driving up overall health care costs.

Senator Campbell's bill ensures patients who remain on the same health plan will have continuity of care and access to the medications their physicians prescribe year after year, limiting the risk of adverse events due to switching medications for non-medical reasons.

Patient advocates and physicians gathered at the Texas Capitol to meet with lawmakers to provide their perspectives on the impact of non-medical switching and why SB 580 is important for patients and their caregivers.

A [2018 poll](#) of Texas voters showed strong support, at 85 percent, for legislation that would restrict health plans from switching a patient's medication for non-medical reasons in order to cut costs, with 67 percent strongly agreeing.

"I know first-hand how important it is to remain medically stable on medications that me and my doctors have determined are the best course of treatment," said Chase Bearden, an advocate with the Coalition for Texans with Disabilities. "This is something I've been working on with my doctors since a high school accident left me paralyzed, so I am keenly aware of how non-medical switching can impact my quality of life. I applaud Senator Campbell for introducing this bill that will ensure patients like me, and those with ongoing and serious conditions like epilepsy, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and mental health issues, will have their medications protected year after year."

Non-medical switching can occur several different ways:

- when health plans change their formulary to eliminate certain drugs from coverage
- when health plans place medications on a tier that requires significantly higher out-of-pocket costs to the patient
- when health plans increase patients' out-of-pocket requirements
- when health plans reduce the maximum plan coverage amount for prescription medications

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The Coalition for Stable Patients is working to preserve the relationship between patients and providers to make treatment decisions and to ensure that changes to treatment plans are made for health reasons, not for non-medical reasons without medical rationale. The Coalition seeks to pass state legislation that supports patients by further preventing health insurance plans from switching benefits, coverage, utilization management or access that result in negative impact on a patient's health. For more information, visit <https://coalitionforstablepatients.org/>.

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