ABOUT THE WISCONSIN NEUROLOGICAL SOCIETY (WNS)

The Wisconsin Neurological Society was established in 1974 and is affiliated with the American Academy of Neurology (AAN). The purpose of the Wisconsin Neurology Society is to advance the field of Neurology in Wisconsin through educational opportunities and the sharing of scientific information.

WNS focuses on the following:

• Enhance the science and art of neurology in the State of Wisconsin.

• Host meetings and conferences for the exchange of scientific information.

• Effectively represent neurology in conjunction with state voluntary health agencies, state medical societies, governmental health organizations and other professional societies.

• Maintain unbiased political views regarding any legislation or referendum so as not to influence the public.

MAINTAIN ACCESS TO TREATMENT

The Wisconsin Neurological Society joins with the AAN to support legislation to make commonsense exceptions to medication Step Therapy protocols to preserve the provider-patient relationship.

Background

The annual cost of treating neurologic disorders in the United States is more than $500 billion. High drug costs increasingly contribute to the cost of neurologic care and for many, serves as barrier to treatment. Many neurology medications cost tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. Older drugs, such as several used to treat multiple sclerosis, have undergone significant annual price increases despite no change to the product. 1 in 4 Americans report difficulty affording prescription medications but little has been done to address the drivers of high drug prices.

Problem

Rising prescription costs directly impact patients and their health care providers. Medications that treat complex, chronic neurologic conditions like multiple sclerosis and ALS are some of the most expensive on the market. Increasingly, patients must absorb more and more of the cost for their drugs. As a result, prescription abandonment, rationing, and compliance issues are growing problems for people with neurologic disease. Neurologists work hard to provide high quality care for their patients, but the complexities of the drug pricing system can make it difficult for patients to access necessary treatment.

Consequences

Expensive drugs are a burden on the entire health care system. As drug prices increase, access to needed therapies is restricted as insurers and payers adopt practices to limit choice and shift costs to the individual. One tactic used by insurers is called Step Therapy, a practice where a lower cost drug is required to be tried before a more expensive drug can be used. This means patients are forced to use a less expensive drug first, and not the drug determined by their physician to be the best treatment. Patients with neurologic disorders may risk disease progression or be forced to take a drug with unacceptable side effects. This fail first approach puts patients at risk, a downstream effect of unaffordable drug costs in the United States.

Solution

Support legislation to make commonsense exceptions to medication Step Therapy protocols to preserve the provider-patient relationship.