To: Members of the Senate Commerce, Labor & Energy Committee  
Re: Support for SB 404

The undersigned organizations urge support for SB 404, a measure by Senator David Parks that will help late-stage cancer patients.

SB 404 states that health insurers cannot require a patient with late-stage cancer to go through step therapy or fail first on a drug before that patient gets the drug his doctor ordered.

Step therapy, also known as “fail first,” is a tool health insurers use to control the drugs given to a patient. The insurer requires the patient to try a certain branded and/or generic medicine, one that costs less than the one prescribed by the physician, or one for which the insurer has negotiated a more favorable price to the insurance plan. If the patient “fails” on the medication, they are then allowed to get the drug their doctor prescribed in the first place.

Forcing a patient with late stage cancer to go through step therapy is harmful because the process:

- Limits the patient’s access to treatment(s) their doctors recommend;
- May delay access to the most appropriate treatment for the patient,
- The process undermines the role of the prescribing physician in the patient’s treatment plan because it ultimately places the decision-making authority for treatment with the insurer.

Because of the aggressive nature of their diagnosis, patients with advanced stage cancer do not have the time to work through a step therapy process. Timely treatment with the most appropriate medicines, as identified by their healthcare providers, is the only acceptable course of action for these individuals.

For these reasons, we strongly urge a support vote for SB 404.