



NEW ENGLAND REGION

serving Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire Rhode Island & Vermont

35 Cold Spring Road, Suite 411
Rocky Hill, CT 06067-3166
TELEPHONE: (860) 563-1177
TOLL-FREE: (800) 541-8350
FAX: (860) 563-6018
EMAIL: infosne@arthritis.org

February 17, 2015

The Honorable Carlo Leone and David Baram, Co-Chairs, and Members
General Law Committee
Room 3500, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

PROPOSED HB 5771-An Act Authorizing Pharmacists to Dispense Ninety Day Prescriptions

Written Testimony

Senator Leone, Representative Baram and Member of the General Law Committee

I am Susan Nesci, Vice President for Advocacy for the Arthritis Foundation in New England. The Arthritis Foundation supports the option for 90 day prescription refills for certain maintenance medications used for chronic conditions, such as osteoarthritis.

Many commercial insurance plans now promote 90 day refills for maintenance medications because studies show that it improves compliance. For example, Express Scripts and Walgreen's Pharmacy partnered last year to promote 90 day refills for certain maintenance medications.

We do have two suggestions for this proposal:

One, we recommend that consumers be involved in the decision for a 90 day refill. Depending on their policy, they may be facing three co-pays or co-insurances all at once, which could affect their ability to pay for and pick up the prescription.

Two, we recommend excluding from the 90 day fill provision biologic medications that are injected or infused because of safety and out-of-pocket costs. Our safety concerns are for proper storage since most of these medications typically have to be refrigerated. We are also concerned that the cost for three co-pays or co-insurance could run in the thousands of dollars and affect compliance.

Biologics are used in the treatment of inflammatory types of arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis, leukemia and lymphoma, certain cancers, and multiple sclerosis. Most insurers or pharmacy benefit managers use specialty pharmacies to regulate dispensing of biologics rather than retail pharmacies.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals.