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March 4, 2016

The Honorable Carlo Leon
The Honorable David Baram
Co-Chairs, General Law Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

Re: Support SB 313, An Act Concerning Biological Products

Dear Chairmen Leon and Baram:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Hispanic Medical Association we urge support for SB 313 regarding substitution of biological drug products.

SB 313 would (1) authorize a pharmacist to substitute an alternative biological product when filling a prescription for a prescribed biological product if the alternative biological product is designated as interchangeable with the reference product and (2) provide physicians with access to information regarding specific biological products dispensed to their patients.

We recognize the rising use of biologics and biosimilars in our population now aging with increased chronic disease. Biosimilars go through an extensive review process and manufacturers are required to submit immense studies and data demonstrating a products' efficacy and ensuring it is safe for use by consumers. A pathway for biosimilar regulation in the U.S. was established as a provision of the 2008 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) and in 2012 the FDA issued draft guidelines for biosimilars and a list of biosimilars and interchangeable biological products.

In summary, the National Hispanic Medical Association recommends your support for SB 313 to clarify the procedures for biosimilar substitution for biologic treatments in a way that increases safety for the patient. We are especially supportive since this bill will provide increased access to quality treatment for Hispanics and all persons in Connecticut with chronic diseases.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Elena Rios'.

Elena Rios, MD, MSPH
President & CEO