

March 7, 2016

Senator Carlo Leon, Co-Chair
Representative David Baram, Co-Chair
General Law Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Room 3500
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Senate Bill 313 - An Act Concerning Biological Products

Dear Senator Leon and Representative Baram:

On behalf of the 617,000 people in Connecticut with doctor diagnosed arthritis (including 3,400 children with juvenile arthritis), I am writing to express the strong support of the Arthritis Foundation for Senate Bill 313 that will permit the substitution of biologic medications with interchangeable biologic products.

The Affordable Care Act creates a regulatory pathway for approving a new generation of biologic medications called “biosimilars”. Biosimilar medications have the potential to provide safe and effective treatment to people with arthritis at a lower cost than the name-brand biologic medications.

For years, biologics have offered tremendous therapeutic benefits to thousands of patients with arthritis and have also helped many others living with complex chronic diseases. As a result of the Affordable Care Act, new pathways have emerged to assist in the recognition of new biologic products that may be considered “biosimilar” to a currently recognized or reference biologic product.

This new class of biosimilars is just starting to enter the marketplace. These complex, genetically engineered products offer new, and hopefully more, treatment opportunities for people with forms of inflammatory autoimmune arthritis. Through special review processes conducted by the FDA, some of these biosimilar products will be deemed therapeutically equivalent or interchangeable with an original biologic or reference product.

In the near future, interchangeable biosimilars recognized by the FDA may be substituted for an approved biologic. However, as both biologics and biosimilars are complex treatments requiring careful therapeutic monitoring, pathways for substitution require communication and transparency in all pharmacy transactions.

We fully support the physician communication requirement and this important legislation overall. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



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Director of State Legislative Affairs

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Biologics Change Lives for People With Arthritis

The faces of juvenile arthritis a generation ago.

The faces of juvenile arthritis today WITH biologics.

THEN



NOW

