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March 4, 2016

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

RE: Senate Bill 313, an Act Concerning Biological Products – *Support*

Dear Senator Leon and Representative Baram,

On behalf of the American Liver Foundation and the millions Americans who face the daily struggles of liver disease, we respectfully urge you to support SB 313. While the development of biosimilars is a positive step for our patients, substituting a biosimilar absent the proper communication between a patients prescribing physician and a pharmacy or pharmacist could affect patient safety.

Treatment of all forms of liver disease requires a great deal of clinical judgment. What works for one patient doesn't always work for another. The physician is in a unique position to consider the needs of individual patients, factoring in disease duration and severity, prognosis, treatment history and response, risk for adverse events, co-morbidities and potential impact on quality of life. It is to this end, that inappropriate therapy substitutions can result in disease progression and long-term consequences.

Similarly, biosimilars differ from generics in that they are not identical to their biologic counterpart. While generics can be interchanged for a brand-name drug because their basic compounds are matching, biologics and biosimilars are not identical and should be treated as such. It is feasible that a patient could have a different reaction to a biosimilar than he would with its original biologic.

Biosimilars represent a new generation of drugs in liver and gastrointestinal diseases. Interchangeability, automatic substitution and switching are key issues to consider for safety and efficacy when treating patients with biosimilars in clinical practice. Given the importance of the specific needs of each individual patient and the distinct differences between biologics and biosimilars, we believe that proper communication between pharmacists and physicians is crucial to patient care to ensure that patients are receiving the best treatment as prescribed by their physicians.

In order to protect Connecticut's patients, the American Liver Foundation strongly supports SB 313, which includes language regarding prescriber communication. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this legislation. Please contact Jonathan Martin, National Director of Programs at (212) 668-1000, should you require any additional information or clarification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas F. Nealon, III'.

Thomas F. Nealon, III
CEO and Board Chairman
American Liver Foundation

CC:

Representative Kelley Packer (Vice Chair)
Representative Brandon A. Hixon

Representative Christy Perry
Representative Paul Romrell
Representative John Vander Woude
Representative Merrill Beyeler
Representative Eric M. Redman
Representative Caroline Nilsson Troy
Representative John Rusche
Representative Sue Chew