



December 12, 2007

Honorable Philippe Couillard
Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
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par courriel :
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original par la poste

Minister Couillard,

We, as members of Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance would like to thank you on behalf of Quebecers living with ankylosing spondylitis for providing access to all three biologic response modifier medications on the provincial drug reimbursement formulary.

The inclusion of the entire class of biologic response modifiers is central to improving and maintaining the health of people living with ankylosing spondylitis in Quebec. There is irrefutable evidence supporting the use of biologic response modifiers for the treatment and management of ankylosing spondylitis¹. In addition to the personal health benefits that emerge from appropriate and timely treatment, there are important social, political, and economic benefits for government. For example, the consequences of un-treated or under-treated ankylosing spondylitis, such as spinal rigidity, increased risk of fractures and other joint problems, are irreversible and result in higher use of health services and work disability².

¹ Rudwaleit et al. *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, 2007; vol.56, #9 (supp): S871; van der Heijde, *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, 2007; vol.56, #9 (supp): S252; Keat et al. *Rheumatology*, 2005; 44:939-947; Boonen et al. *Arthritis Rheum* 2006; **65**:201–8.

² Kobelt et al. *Rheumatology* 2004; **43**:1158–66.; Keat et al. *Rheumatology*, 2005; 44:939-947; Boonen et al. *Arthritis Rheum* 2006; **65**:201–8.

Given the strong scientific evidence, we urge you, as Minister of Health, **to take the immediate necessary steps list all medications that make up the class of biologic response modifiers on the provincial drug benefit plan for people with ankylosing spondylitis.** We remind you that providing a timely reimbursement listing for this medication will ensure that citizens of this province living with ankylosing spondylitis are able to reduce the pain and disability associated with delayed treatment and improve their quality of life.

We salute your government for taking the lead and listing all three biologics available for ankylosing spondylitis to individuals living with ankylosing spondylitis in Quebec. This not only illustrates a strong commitment to the health of your citizens but also demonstrates your adherence to evidence-based decision-making.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn
Présidente, Comité ACE
Personne souffrant de
polyarthrite rhumatoïde arthritiques



Louise Bergeron
Représentante, comité de direction QC
Alliance canadienne des patients arthritiques
Personne souffrant de lupus érythémateux
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Marcel Ruest
Représentant, comité de direction QC
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Personne souffrant de spondylarthrite
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C.c. Louise Montreuil, sous-ministre adjointe

Note : veuillez adresser toute correspondance à Madame Cheryl Koehn, comité ACE, 910 B Richards Street, Vancouver, C.-B. V6B 3C1.