



August 15, 2007

Honourable Floyd K. Roland
Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 2L9

Sent via email to:
hsa@gov.nt.ca
Original mailed

Dear Minister Roland:

Thank you for your May 31, 2007 letter responding to our request on March 20, 2007, for the Northwest Territories to expedite its review and listing of rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

We are pleased to see that the Government of the Northwest Territories accepted the recommendation of the Common Drug Review (CDR) and has listed rituximab on the publicly-funded drug benefit plan. Rituximab is an important medication to include on the drug benefit plan as it is intended to treat people in the Northwest Territories with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis who have had an inadequate response to an anti-TNF agent, the current "state-of-the-art" class of treatments. Just like in HIV/AIDS, it is a cocktail of medication treatments that help as much as possible to restore the normal immune function of the person living with rheumatoid arthritis. No one person living with rheumatoid arthritis responds to the same cocktail of medications as the next.

For these reasons, Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance thank you on behalf of its community members affected by rheumatoid arthritis for accepting the CDR recommendation and including this medication in the territorial drug benefit plan. This will ensure that citizens of Northwest Territories living with rheumatoid arthritis will have timely access to the best medications and a greater choice in treatment options to help them effectively manage their disease.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn
President, Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person with rheumatoid arthritis



Anne Dooley
President, Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

C.c. Greta Sittichinli, Manager, Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories

Note: Please address reply correspondence to Ms. Cheryl Koehn, Arthritis Consumer Experts, 910 B Richards Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 3C1, or to Anne Dooley, 206 Garrison Crescent, Saskatoon, SK., S7H 2Z8. Thank you.