



August 15, 2007

Susan Paetkau
Director, Drug Programs Branch
3rd.Floor 5700 Yonge Street
North York, ON
M2M 4K5

Sent via email to:
drugprograms@moh.gov.on.ca
original mailed

Dear Ms. Paetkau:

Thank you for your April 27, 2007 letter responding to our request on March 20, 2007, for Ontario to expedite its review and listing of rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

We were pleased to see that the Ontario Committee to Evaluate Drugs (CED) has recommended that rituximab continue to be reimbursed through the Individual Clinical Review (ICR) mechanism. However, we are disappointed that the CED has chosen not to follow the Common Drug Review (CDR) recommendations and instead has established a criterion that requires patients to fail two anti-TNF medications before rituximab is reimbursed.

The clinical trial data upon which both Health Canada and the CDR approved rituximab is definitive: The medication is safe, effective and cost-effective after one anti-TNF failure. The CED's listing is not in the best interests of patients as it hinders timely access to critical medication options in the setting of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis. Forcing Ontarians to try another is unjust and unsupported by the available scientific evidence.

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While Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance are pleased that rituximab is listed on the Ontario drug benefit plan, we urge you to revise the reimbursement criterion established by the Ontario CED by following the Health Canada product monograph and the CDR listing recommendation.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

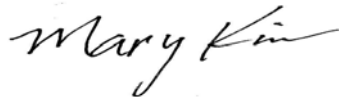
Sincerely,



on file

Cheryl Koehn
President
Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

Laurie Proulx
ON Steering Committee Representative
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with rheumatoid arthritis



Mary Kim
ON Steering Committee Representative
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

Encl.

C.c. George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Helen Stevenson, Executive Officer, Ontario Public Drug Programs

Note: Please address reply correspondence to Ms. Cheryl Koehn, Arthritis Consumer Experts, 910 B Richards Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 3C1.