



March 20, 2007

Cathy Rouleau
Directrice de cabinet
1075 Ch. Sainte-Foy
15th Floor
Québec, Québec
G1S 2M1

sent via email to:
ministre@msss.gov.qc.ca
Original mailed

Dear Cathy Rouleau:

Thank you for responding to our December 18, 2006 letter to Minister of Health, Philippe Couillard, in which we requested the Conseil du médicament expedite its review of the drugs abatacept (Orencia®) and rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

As patients living in Quebec we understand the need for effective treatments that alleviate suffering and disability allowing people with rheumatoid arthritis a good quality of life and to continue to be productive members of society. Quebec is the most progressive of all the provinces in providing necessary medications to its citizens and it is for this reason we are informing you that these drugs have been approved for people with rheumatoid arthritis.

In an effort to work with government and keep you informed of emerging/new effective medications deemed important by our community in the treatment of arthritis, we write today to bring your attention to the February 14, 2007 Canadian Expert Drug Advisory Committee's (CEDAC) recommendation that rituximab be added (with special criteria) to Provincial formulary drug reimbursement lists.

We again ask that your department take the necessary steps to list rituximab on the drug reimbursement list in an expedited fashion. We remind you that this therapy is intended to treat Quebecers with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis with an inadequate response to an anti-TNF agent. At present, no effective treatment options are available for these individuals. Delays in making this treatment available will increase the probability of unnecessary negative physical, emotional, and social consequences.

Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient make this request on behalf of its community members affected by rheumatoid arthritis.

We thank you in advance for considering our request, and await word from you on the Conseil du médicament listing decision for rituximab

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn
President, Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person with rheumatoid arthritis



Marcel Ruest
QC Steering Committee
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with ankylosing spondylitis



Louise Bergeron
QC Steering Committee Representative
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with Systemic Lupus Erythmatosus

C.c. Philippe Couillard, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

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