Arthritis Consumer Experts™
joint action for Canadians with arthritis

Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance

August 15, 2007

Hon. Len Taylor
Room 346
Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
CANADA S4S 0B3

Sent via email to:
minister@health.gov.sk.ca
Original mailed

Dear Minister Taylor:

Thank you for your April 18, 2007 letter responding to our request on March 20, 2007, for Saskatchewan to expedite its review and listing of rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

You noted in your letter of April 18, 2007, that the Common Drug Review process was valued by the Saskatchewan drug review committees and vitally important to timely decision-making. Yet, three months have passed and we note rituximab has still not been listed on Saskatchewan's drug benefit plan, *despite having received a "recommend to list" review by the Common Drug Review (see attached document)* on February 14, 2007. We ask again that your department take immediate action to list rituximab on the Saskatchewan drug benefit plan.

We remind you that this therapy is intended to treat people in Saskatchewan with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis with an inadequate response to an anti-TNF agent, the current "state-of-the-art" class of treatments. Rituximab is an important medication to include on the drug reimbursement formulary as the research is conclusive that numerous different molecules – like in HIV/AIDS and cancer – cause and promote the disease. 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, and on behalf of its community members living with rheumatoid arthritis, Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance make this second request to immediately list rituximab on the Saskatchewan drug benefit plan. *This will have little to no impact on the existing Saskatchewan drug budget as rituximab is less expensive than biologic response modifiers currently listed and patients cannot be treated with two biologic response modifiers at the same time.*

We continue to await word from you on Saskatchewan's listing decision for rituximab.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Koehn
President, Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

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

Encl.

C.c. Kevin Wilson, Executive Director, Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch

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