



March 20, 2007

Honourable Brad Cathers
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

Sent via email to:
brad.cathers@gov.yk.ca
Original mailed

Dear Minister Cathers:

In an effort to work collaboratively with government, we, as representatives of Arthritis Consumer Experts, the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance and The Arthritis Society BC/Yukon Division, sent you a letter on December 18, 2006 to bring your attention to two new medications that have received their notice of compliance (NOC) from Health Canada in the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis: abatacept (Orencia®) and rituximab (Rituxan®).

To date, we have not had any response from your office, but felt it important to let you know that on 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 remind you that this therapy is intended to treat citizens of the Yukon 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 Yukon Formulary Working Group listing decision for rituximab.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn
President
Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person with rheumatoid arthritis



Ron Woznow, PhD
Executive Director
The Arthritis Society,
BC and Yukon Division



Colleen Maloney
BC Steering Committee Representative
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

C.c. Dianne Tait, Manager, Extended Benefits and Pharmaceutical Programs

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