



August 15, 2007

Bob Nakagawa  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Pharmaceutical Services  
Ministry of Health  
Parliament Building  
Victoria BC  
V8V 1X4

**sent via email to:**  
**Bob.Nakagawa@gov.bc.ca**  
**original mailed**

Dear Mr. Nakagawa:

Thank you for your May 15, 2007 letter responding to our request on March 20, 2007, for BC PharmaCare to expedite its review and listing of rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

You noted in your letter of May 15, 2007 that the Common Drug Review process was valued by BC PharmaCare and vitally important to timely decision-making by its Drug Benefit Committee. Yet, three months have passed and we note rituximab has still not been listed on PharmaCare's drug benefit formulary despite having received a "recommend to list" review by the Common Drug Review (see attached document). We ask again that your department take immediate action to list rituximab on the BC PharmaCare drug benefit plan.

We remind you that this therapy is intended to treat British Columbians 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, the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance and The Arthritis Society, BC and Yukon Division make this second request to immediately list rituximab on the BC drug benefit plan. *This will have little to no impact on the existing BC PharmaCare 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 BC PharmaCare's 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

Encl.

C.c. Honourable George Abbott, BC Minister of Health

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