



March 20, 2007

Honourable Chester Gillan
Department of Health
16 Garfield Street
Second Floor
PO Box 2000,
Charlottetown, PEI
C1A 7N8

**Sent via email to:
jcgillan@gov.pe.ca
Original mailed**

Dear Minister Gillan:

In an effort to work collaboratively with government, we, as representatives of Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance, 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) recommended 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 Prince Edward Island 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 Prince Edward Island formulary listing decision for rituximab

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn
President
Person with rheumatoid arthritis



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



Colleen Murray
PEI Steering Committee Representative
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

C.c. Patrick Crawford, pharmacy consultant

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