



March 20, 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 responding to our December 18, 2006 letter in which we requested the Saskatchewan Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch to expedite its review of the drugs abatacept (Orencia®) and rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe 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 again 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.

In light of your comments on the value of the Common Drug Review process to Saskatchewan drug formulary decision-making, 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 Albertans 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.

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Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance 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 Saskatchewan formulary listing decision for rituximab.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn
President, Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

Anne Dooley
President, SK Steering Committee Representative
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

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 Cresc., Saskatoon, SK. S7H 2Z8