



September 10, 2007

Hon. George Abbott
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

sent via email to:
Hlth.health@gov.bc.ca
original mailed

Dear Minister Abbott:

In an effort to work collaboratively with government, Arthritis Consumer Experts, the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance and The Arthritis Society BC and Yukon division are writing to bring your attention to the June 20, 2007 Common Drug Review's **Canadian Expert Drug Advisory Committee (CEDAC) recommendation that adalimumab (Humira®) be added to provincial drug benefit plans for people with active ankylosing spondylitis, who have had an inadequate response to at least three different nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and, in patients with peripheral joint involvement who have failed to respond to methotrexate or sulfasalazine (See attached CEDAC recommendation.)**

Currently, British Columbians living with ankylosing spondylitis have no biologic medications available to them on the provincial drug reimbursement formulary. According to your own website the three existing biologic response modifiers for ankylosing spondylitis on the market have all been under review for significant periods of time. Adalimumab (Humira®) has been under review since November 29, 2006, infliximab (Remicade®) has been under review since July 6, 2005 and etanercept (Enbrel®) has been under review since May 16, 2005. This continues to be unacceptable to the arthritis community and should be to the Government of British Columbia, too.

As clearly outlined in the CEDAC recommendation, adalimumab not only “resulted in significantly more patients achieving ASAS 20, 50 and 70 after 12 weeks of treatment” but also improved quality of life, reduced disease activity and was shown to be cost effective.

Given this strong CEDAC recommendation and your Ministry’s support for the Common Drug Review process, we urge you, as Minister of Health, **to take the immediate necessary steps to have adalimumab listed on the provincial drug benefit plan for people with ankylosing spondylitis.** We remind you that this therapy is intended to treat British Columbians with ankylosing spondylitis. Providing a timely reimbursement listing for this medication will ensure that British Columbians living with ankylosing spondylitis are able to reduce the pain and disability associated with delaying treatment, improve their quality of life and have the same care and treatment options that people living with cancer and HIV/AIDS have in this province.

We thank you in advance for considering our request, and await word from you on BC PharmaCare’s listing decision for adalimumab for ankylosing spondylitis.

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. Bob Nakagawa, Assistant Deputy Minister

**Note: Please address reply correspondence to all signatories above to:
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