



March 15, 2007

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

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

Dear Mr. Nakagawa:

Thank you for responding to our November 9, 2006 letter to Minister of Health, George Abbott in which we requested PharmaCare expedite its review of the drugs abatacept (Orencia®) and rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

Following Minister Abbott's in-person request of us to keep him informed of emerging/new effective medications deemed important by our community in the treatment of arthritis, we write today 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 BC PharmaCare 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 British Columbians 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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BC PharmaCare
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Arthritis Consumer Experts, the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance, and The Arthritis Society, BC and Yukon Division 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 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

C.c. Honourable George Abbott, 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.**