



March 20, 2007

Honourable Ross Wiseman  
Confederation Building  
4th fl, West Block  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL  
A1B 4J6

**Sent via email to:  
rosswiseman@gov.nl.ca  
original mailed**

Dear Minister Wiseman:

Thank you for responding to our December 18, 2006 letter in which we requested the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program 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 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 the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program 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 citizens living in Newfoundland and Labrador 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 Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program listing decision for rituximab

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn  
President, Arthritis Consumer Experts  
Person with rheumatoid arthritis

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

C.c. Colleen Janes, Director, Pharmaceutical Services

**Note: Please address reply correspondence to Ms. Cheryl Koehn, Arthritis Consumer Experts, 910 B Richards Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 3C1, or to Anne Dooley, 206 Garrison Crescent, Saskatoon, SK., S7H 2Z8. Thank you.**