



August 15, 2007

Honourable Chris d'Entremont
Department of Health
PO Box 488
Halifax, NS
B3J 2R8

Sent via email to:
healmin@gov.ns.ca
Original mailed

Dear Minister d'Entremont:

Thank you for your April 12, 2007 letter responding to our request on March 20, 2007, for Nova Scotia to expedite its review and listing of rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

We were pleased to see that Nova Scotia accepted the recommendation of the Common Drug Review (CDR) and has listed rituximab on the publicly-funded provincial drug benefit plan. Rituximab is an important medication to include on the drug reimbursement formulary as it is intended to treat people in Nova Scotia with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis who have had an inadequate response to an anti-TNF agent, the current "state-of-the-art" class of treatments. Just like in HIV/AIDS, it is a cocktail of medication treatments that help as much as possible to restore the normal immune function of the person living with rheumatoid arthritis. No one person living with rheumatoid arthritis responds to the same cocktail of medications as the next.

Hon. Chris d'Entremont
New medications for rheumatoid arthritis
Page 2

For these reasons, Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance thank you on behalf of its community members affected by rheumatoid arthritis for accepting the CDR recommendation and including this medication on the provincial drug benefit plan. This will ensure that Nova Scotians living with rheumatoid arthritis will have timely access to valued medications and a greater choice in treatment options.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn
President, Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person with rheumatoid arthritis



Anne Dooley
President, 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