

August 15, 2007

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Box 1200,
Iqaluit, NU
X0A 0H0

Sent via email to:
atagak@gov.nu.ca
Original mailed

Dear Minister Aglukkaq:

Thank you for your July 4 2007 letter, responding to our request on March 20, 2007, for Nunavut to expedite the listing of rituximab (Rituxan®) for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis.

In your July 4, 2007 letter, you stated that the Nunavut Department of Health and Social Services adds medications to the territorial formulary when they are added to the Federal NIHB Formulary. In light of this, we are pleased to inform you that rituximab was added to the NIHB drug formulary as of ?, and urge your government to immediately add rituximab to territorial drug programs.

Rituximab is an important medication to include on the drug programs as it is intended to treat people in Nunavut 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.

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 territorial drug lists. This will ensure that citizens of Nunavut 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

Encls.

C.c. Non-Insured Health Benefits Directorate, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch
Alex Campbell, Deputy Minister

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.