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April 28, 2016

Senator Len Fasano  
Senate Minority Leader  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 3400  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: SB 313 – An Act Concerning Biological Products**

Dear Senator Fasano:

The Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO) is a national organization composed of approximately 35 state and regional professional rheumatology societies. CSRO formed by physicians to ensure excellence and access to the highest quality care for patients with rheumatologic, autoimmune, and musculoskeletal disease.

Rheumatologists are on the forefront of treatments for patients with autoimmune diseases. With the advent of biologic medications, we have been able to stop the progression of some of these diseases and avoid the development of life-long deformities. Biological products available for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases have had a significant impact on improving our patients' quality of life, preventing deformities and disability, and lowering mortality.

**On behalf of CSRO, I urge you to consider SB 313 before the legislative session adjourns.**

This bill includes much needed patient safety rules for dispensing pharmacists to communicate with physicians about biosimilar substitutions within 5 business days. Requiring this communication as quickly as possible provides physicians an opportunity to counter and correctly report any adverse effects of medications.

With FDA approval of the first biosimilar drug last year, biological products continue to be of growing importance for rheumatology patients. CSRO supports the safe introduction of interchangeable biologic drugs into the practice of medicine in Connecticut and urges passage of SB 313.

Sincerely,



Michael Stevens, MD  
President  
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations