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June 16, 2015

Governor Bruce Rauner
Office of the Governor
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Re: Support Senate Bill 455 – Amending the Pharmacy Practice Act for Biosimilars

Dear Governor Rauner:

The Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO) is a national organization composed of more than 30 state and regional professional rheumatology societies formed in order to advocate and ensure excellence and access to the highest quality care for patients with rheumatologic, autoimmune, and musculoskeletal disease.

Rheumatologists are on the forefront of utilizing the dramatic long-term, life-changing clinical improvements that biological products have on Americans. 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 disability, and lowering mortality.

As you consider signing SB 455, CSRO wishes to convey its support for this important legislation.

This unanimously passed bi-partisan bill provides important pathways for access to these unique medications. It also creates much needed patient safety rules for dispensing pharmacists to communicate with physicians about biosimilar substitutions within 5 days. Requiring this communication provides physicians a consistent window to understand and counter any adverse effects of medications.

With the FDA approval in March of the very first biosimilar drug, biological products continue to be of growing importance for rheumatology patients. CSRO supports the safe introduction of biosimilars into the practice of medicine in Illinois and urges passage of SB 455.

Sincerely,



Michael Schweitz, MD
President
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations