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April 20, 2015

The Honorable Tip Knopp
Chair, Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE, S-309
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Re: Support Oregon Senate Bill 147 – Relating to biological products;
declaring an emergency.**

Dear Senator Knopp:

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

As your committee considers SB 147, CSRO wishes to convey its support for the premise of the legislation.

Without passage of this bill, patients and physicians in Oregon would see the expiration of a notification provision requiring communication between a pharmacist and a physician when a substitute biosimilar medication is dispensed. The sunset of this provision puts patients in Oregon at risk when information is not available to a physician about exactly what medication their patient is using.

Due to the complexity of biologic drugs, no biologic or biosimilar medication is identical. Tiny variations in these medications can cause adverse reactions in patients and without notification, physicians may not have any way to determine how to record and best treat these complications.

While this bill provides much needed provisions to allow this notification, it also would require a pharmacist to notify to the prescribing physician what product was dispensed “within a reasonable time.” We ask that this provision be amended to require notification to occur within a short, defined time. A specific time period offers physicians a safer and more consistent window to understand and counter any adverse.

We applaud Oregon’s initiative in the passage of important biosimilar legislation and ask for continued foresight in the passage of SB 147 with a notification provision which allow physicians to quickly know what medicine their patient receives.

Sincerely,



Michael Schweitz, MD
President
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations