Representative Mitch Greenlick
Chair, House Committee on Health Care

Representative Rob Nosse

Cc: Members

Dear Representative Greenlick and Representative Nosse,

On behalf of the Hepatitis Foundation International (HFI), we are writing to request that you support House Bill 4105 regarding the pharmacy substitution of biosimilar medical products. HFI is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization established in 1994 to eradicate viral hepatitis for 400 million people globally. HFI is also dedicated to increasing and promoting health and wellness, as well as, reducing the incidence of preventable liver-related chronic diseases and lifestyles that negatively impact the liver. Some of these diseases include obesity, diabetes, hepatitis, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular disease, fatty liver disease and liver cancer. We implement our mission through our touchstones to educate, prevent, serve, support, and reach well over 5 million patients and health care professionals annually.

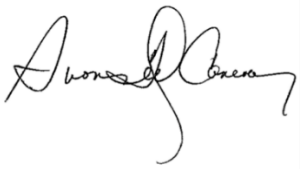
Biosimilars, along with their respective biologics, are expected to increase the treatment choices and may be more cost effective for patients. The US law defines two levels of approval by FDA - biosimilar and interchangeable. A product approved as interchangeable will have demonstrated that it can be expected to have the same effect in any given patient and that the patient will be at no greater risk of adverse events or an unwanted immune response as a result of switching between the original and the biosimilar as if the patient had stayed on the reference product. The House Bill accounts for interchangeability, as it provides that only interchangeable biosimilars - those which are therapeutically equivalent to their reference products - may ever be substituted.

As a patient advocacy organization, the patient and their quality of life is of great importance. For this reason, it is critical for all members of a patient's healthcare team to know what medications their patient is taking. Anytime treatment is altered, the medical professionals involved should be notified. It is critical to the patient's health and well-being that they have a transparent and trusting relationship with their healthcare provider.

We believe pharmacists should thoroughly follow the policies addressed in House Bill 4105 in regards to the use of biosimilar products. The use of biosimilar products would be a highly effective way to decrease the cost of medicines and treatments, and lessen the financial burden for patients that need payment assistance. In addition, the passing of the House Bill will also allow for patients to have an array of treatment options that will help improve their quality of life. Furthermore, we believe that if this legislation is not enacted, patient safety may be compromised.

The Hepatitis Foundation International looks forward to assisting further as this process continues. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at ifcameron@hepatitisfoundation.org or by telephone at (301)-565-9410 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ivonne Fuller Cameron
CEO, Hepatitis Foundation International