



February 12, 2020

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania Consumer Affairs Committee:

On behalf of the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association and the millions of Pennsylvanians struggling to manage complicated and potentially fatal diseases of unmet need, we would like to express our strong support for HB 853 an act to amend the Unfair Insurance Practices Act insurance law in relation to prescription drug formulary changes during a contract year which would prohibit non-medical switching practices.

Because lupus is an extremely unpredictable, highly individualized, heterogeneous, multi-system autoimmune disease, having access to the full array of treatments in order to maintain long-term disease stability is absolutely essential and critical to patient well-being. We recognize that any disruption in continuity of care as a result of payer utilization management policies, formulary changes or other cost containment measures has detrimental consequences for individuals dealing with complex care needs causing heightened immune responses, adverse effects, increased symptomology, disease exacerbation and augmented costs.

The Lupus and Allied Diseases Association supports initiatives that address barriers to healthcare access in order to ensure individuals receive the most appropriate therapies as directed by their treating healthcare professionals and consistent disease management is preserved. We strongly support establishing essential patient protections that improve access to vital therapies; in turn reducing the physical and economic impact of disease, improving outcomes, and allowing individuals to lead more productive lives.

The Lupus and Allied Diseases Association is a passion driven, all-volunteer patient advocacy organization dedicated to improving quality of life for those impacted by lupus and allied diseases and conditions of unmet need by promoting innovative advocacy, awareness and biomedical research program initiatives and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to promote patient-centered care and to ensure public policy keeps pace with biomedical research innovation.

As patient stakeholders who represent patients and loved ones dealing with serious medical conditions on a daily basis, we applaud Representative Oberlander for her ongoing commitment to improve healthcare by sponsoring HB 853 which will establish consumer safeguards to ensure that Pennsylvania residents have access to lifesaving and life-enhancing therapies through consistent coverage, stable formularies, and fair out-of-pocket costs.

In closing, we implore you to support HB 853 and help to move it forward to become law this session.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen A. Arntsen".

Kathleen A. Arntsen
President/CEO