



Global Healthy Living Foundation
515 North Midland Avenue
Upper Nyack, New York 10960 USA
+1 845 348 0400
+1 845 348 0210 fax
www.ghlf.org

May 6, 2015

Assemblyman Herb Conaway Jr.
Chair, Assembly Health and Senior Services
Committee
8008 Rt. 130 North, Bldg. C
Delran, NJ 08075

Assemblyman Daniel R. Benson
Vice-Chair, Assembly Health and Senior Services
Committee
3691-A Nottingham Way
Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

RE: **Assembly, No. 2477 – Support**

Chairman Conaway and Vice-Chairman Benson,

The Global Healthy Living Foundation (GHLF) is a 501 (c)(3) patient group that works to improve the quality of life for people with chronic disease, often focusing on those least able to advocate for themselves. As a patient advocacy organization, GHLF represents more than 75,000 chronically ill patients, including your fellow New Jersey residents. Many of these individuals have rheumatoid arthritis, take biologics, and stand to benefit greatly from the addition of biosimilars.

I am writing you today to express our support for A-2477.

At GHLF, our focus is on improving the lives of patients with chronic illnesses through health care education and mobilization programs that stress the importance of diagnosis, early and innovative medical intervention, long-term lifestyle improvement and therapeutic compliance. Using various channels of influence, we work to communicate and leverage new and improved medical treatments, such as biologics and biosimilars, to patients. *As promising as these innovative drugs are, GHLF believes that assuring their safety and transparency in the substitution process should be of paramount concern.*

A-2477 takes positive steps toward updating New Jersey law to cover biologics and interchangeable biosimilars in a way that protects patients. Unlike traditional chemical drugs, biologics are unique, complex structures made from living cells that are not easily replicated. A small change or difference in the biosimilar or biologic manufacturing process has the potential to adversely impact the patient.

There are two provisions in A-2477 that GHLF believes are key to ensuring patients' safety and needs are met in the best way possible.

- First, the bill requires a pharmacist or pharmacist's designee dispensing an interchangeable biosimilar notify the prescribing physician within five business days following the dispensing electronically or by facsimile.

- Second, the bill provides that the pharmacist who substitutes a biological product shall record on the prescription label and record of dispensing, the product name and manufacturer of the biological product dispensed, followed by the words: “Substituted for” and the name of the biological product for which the prescription was written.

Inclusion of notification provisions in legislation regarding this class of medication are crucial to preserving the doctor/patient relationship as well as the integrity of medical records that are invaluable if there is an adverse event from using the drug.

Because of this, we are very supportive of A-2477.

If it is determined by the doctor and patient that an interchangeable biosimilar can be substituted for a biologic, or is the preferred treatment, it is obvious to healthcare providers, patients and, we think, the majority of legislators, that proper record keeping be in place in order to track any adverse events that may occur.

As patient advocates, it is our duty to ensure that physicians are in charge of the drugs prescribed and that patients are aware of what drugs they are taking. Patients and physicians are the primary individuals who report any adverse events that occur while on therapy. Adverse events can only be reported accurately if patients and physicians have received proper communication from a pharmacist about what medication has been dispensed. Patient safety is the top priority in the health care process and medical decisions must remain between a doctor and patient. We urge the passage of A-2477 because it introduces biosimilars in a way that ensures the safety of patients and preserves the physician-patient relationship.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this legislation and would be pleased to provide any further information that you may require.

Sincerely,



Seth Ginsberg
President, Global Health Living Foundation

CC:
Members, Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee

