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June 19, 2015

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

RE: **SB 455 – Support**

Governor Rauner,

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 80,000 chronically ill patients, including your fellow Illinois 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 broad support for SB 455.

GHLF's 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 intervention, long-term lifestyle improvement and therapeutic compliance. As promising as these innovative drugs are, GHLF believes that assuring their safety and transparency in the substitution process should be of paramount concern.

SB 455 takes positive steps toward updating Illinois 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 three provisions in SB 455 that GHLF believes are key to ensuring patients' safety and needs are met in the best way possible.

- First, the bill requires a pharmacist dispensing an interchangeable biosimilar to notify the prescribing physician within 5 business days of the substitution
- Second, it requires pharmacists to inform a patient of a substitution

- Third, the bill provides the prescribing practitioner the ability to prohibit substitution in writing, orally, or electronically

Inclusion of notification provisions in legislation regarding this class of medication is 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 SB 455.

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 SB 455 because it introduces biosimilars in a way that seeks to ensure the safety of patients and preserves the physician-patient relationship.**

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this legislation and respectfully request that you please sign it into law. We would be pleased to provide any further information that you may require.

Sincerely,



Seth Ginsberg
President, Global Health Living Foundation

CC:
Donovan Borvan
Associate Counsel, Office of the Governor

