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TESTIMONY - STATE BIOSIMILAR SUBSTITUTION

New Jersey State Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee

Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee Consideration of A-2477

Speaker:

Kathleen Hoffmann

Patient Advocate

Global Healthy Living Foundation

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Disclosure: I have no disclosures to make regarding my travel here today. The Global Healthy Living Foundation accepts grants and charitable contributions from pharmaceutical companies, government, private foundations and individuals. We have received scientific briefings from pharmaceutical companies, as well as from our independent medical advisory board.

Good morning Mr. Chairman and committee members.

My name is Kathleen Hoffmann. I'm a patient advocate and member of the Global Healthy Living Foundation's 50-State Network. I have been a resident of New Jersey for the last 33 years. I am currently in the process of starting my own business. My legislators are Assemblymen Joe Danielson and Joseph Egan and Senator Bob Smith. I want to thank you for allowing me to speak today in support of the passage of A2477.

I have Rheumatoid Arthritis. It took me a while before I could even say those words, because there is no cure. Rheumatoid Arthritis is a serious autoimmune disease that attacks the joints and other body parts.

My rheumatologist decided to add a biologic medicine to my therapy. After 3 months, I had no improvement in my symptoms, which is also known as 'failing'. He then switched me to a different biologic medicine, which is self-injected once a week instead of being infused, and my symptoms were greatly improved. Over the next several years, my symptoms subsided enough that I was able to start training for my first half marathon, which I completed in 2012. So you can see why from my perspective, no two biologic therapies are the same!

I believe that biosimilar drugs will greatly improve New Jersey patients' access to these medications and provide cost savings. However, without laws in place to require communication to occur between my pharmacist and physician, I would fear my medication could be substituted without my entire treatment team knowing. This would be a major threat to my relationship with my physician. Everyone needs to be on the same page in order for us to have the transparency needed for my symptoms to improve. As a patient who has experienced regression of my illness, due to switching drugs, communication between my treatment team could mean the difference between me being at work or in the emergency room.



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At its core, A2477 boils down to one word: Trust. The patient-physician relationship does not exist without trust.

The value that biosimilars represent for New Jersey patients, namely expanded access and cost savings, will never be realized if patients and physicians do not first trust each other and second trust this class of product. Trust is achieved through transparency. A2477, with its communication provisions intact, achieves that needed transparency and ensures that the patient-physician relationship is strong. GHLF and I urge the members of this Committee to support Assembly Bill 2477. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my remarks and I would be pleased to provide any further information that you may require. Thank you for your time and attention.

