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TESTIMONY - STATE BIOSIMILAR SUBSTITUTION

98th Michigan Legislature

Senate Health Policy Committee Consideration of HB-4812

Speaker:

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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 Rachelle. I'm a patient advocate and member of the Global Healthy Living Foundation's 50-State Network. I have been a resident of Chesterfield, Michigan for the past 12 years, but I am a lifelong Michigander. My legislators are Representative Andrea LaFontaine and Senator Jack Brandenburg. I want to thank you for allowing me to speak today about House Bill 4812.

I was first diagnosed with arthritis at the age of 19. I was a sophomore studying history and secondary education at Oakland University when spinal pain caused me to be nearly bedridden during the winter semester. It took months to get the proper diagnosis and care that would eventually allow me to return to my studies. The treatments that helped me return to my life and studies included a biologic- medication, similar to the ones being discussed today.

I have a type of arthritis that is caused by an overactive immune system. Although over the years, doctors have disagreed about what my specific arthritis diagnosis, the most important factor in my treatment is the understanding that the type of arthritis I have is caused by my immune system. These types of arthritis conditions don't just attack joints. They are chronic inflammatory conditions in which your immune system can also attack your heart, lungs, eyes, and other internal organs. Treatment with biologics is the difference between life and death for people like me.

Being treated with a biologic is the reason I am able to sit here with you today. I still battle pain,



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swelling, fatigue, and a myriad of other symptoms and conditions that are related to my arthritis, but this is a vast improvement on what my life would be like without effective treatment.

Although I live with several autoimmune conditions that have changed the trajectory and plans I had for my life, I am proud to say that I am a mom and a wife. It was upon becoming a mother that I realized my calling was to help other young women with autoimmune disease navigate motherhood. From family planning to the day-to-day juggling; I use the internet to connect with other moms around the world to help them navigate a world that can be scary and overwhelming. I have also committed myself to staying informed of the latest research with regards to pregnancy and lactation and autoimmune arthritis and creating a dialogue with other women fighting these diseases.

When planning a pregnancy, the communication between doctor and patient is sacrosanct. The relationship I have with my physician is built on mutual trust. Women with arthritis often plan pregnancies and the subsequent adjustments to their medications years in advance. It requires honest and transparent communication. I am happy to say that I am pregnant with my second child. It took nearly two years of planning, medication changes, and disease management to prepare my body for this pregnancy. One of the things my doctor and I did to prepare for this pregnancy was switch to a biologic that has more extensive data on its impact on the baby growing inside me.

Without laws in place to require communication to occur between my pharmacist, physician, and me, my medication could be substituted without my entire treatment team knowing. This would be a major threat to my health, and potentially the health of my baby. The relationship with my physician would be irreparably damaged. As a patient who has experienced first-hand the differences between these biologic medicines, mandatory communication between my treatment team could mean the difference between my being able to care for my family and being hospitalized. We also cannot forget the impact it could have on the development of my unborn child. Could you imagine having a medication that you thoughtfully and purposefully chose for the growing life inside of you changed without your knowing? Without your physician knowing?

At its core, HB 4812 has to boil down to two words: Trust and transparency. The patient-physician relationship and positive health outcomes do not exist without them. If you pass this bill without mandatory communication or notification between a pharmacist, a patient, and a doctor, you are putting me and my baby at risk.

GHLF and I urge the members of this Committee to include patient and physician communication in HB 4812. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my remarks and I would be pleased to provide any





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further information that you may require. Thank you for your time and attention.

