



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

January 18, 2012

The Honorable Felipe Fuentes
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ASSEMBLY BILL No. 369. Health care coverage: prescription drugs.

Dear Assemblymember Fuentes,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the more than 55,000 members nationwide of CreakyJoints.org, a part of the Global Healthy Living Foundation, to express our support for AB 369, an act concerning health insurance coverage of prescription drugs. More than 1,200 members of CreakyJoints live in California, and I write to you on behalf of those residents living with chronic pain.

CreakyJoints is an arthritis patient advocacy organization dedicated to building, sustaining and educating people with all forms of arthritis. Nearly 75 percent of our members have Rheumatoid Arthritis, and I would like to specifically address their concerns regarding step therapy for the treatment of their RA or chronic pain.

About 1.3 million people in the United States are believed to have Rheumatoid Arthritis. Rheumatoid Arthritis is a painful condition that affects all ages, races, and social and ethnic groups. Although there is no cure for Rheumatoid Arthritis, the disease can be controlled in most people. Early, aggressive therapy to stop or slow inflammation in the joints can prevent or reduce painful symptoms, prevent or reduce joint destruction and deformity, and prevent or lessen disability and other complications.

Here are just a few examples explaining why step therapy strategies are problematic for RA patients and doctors:

- Step therapy or fail first protocols require patients to experiment with various pain medications - including over-the-counter pain medications - before getting the one originally prescribed by their doctor. Oftentimes patients have to “fail” up to five times before they are finally given the prescription that their doctor originally prescribed. The duration of this protocol is left up to the insurance company and can last up to 130 days per medication.
- Step therapy is time-consuming from a physician and patient standpoint, is more expensive from a direct and indirect out-of-pocket cost perspective, it denies patients the

Continued on Page 2

drugs they need when they need them, and creates additional barriers leading people to forgo needed medications

Because of the recession, high unemployment, and an erosion of employer-based insurance, now more than ever, patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis need access to affordable prescription drugs coverage. AB 369 would bring California one step closer to changing practices that have resulted in higher long-term health care costs and the unnecessary physical and emotional suffering that patients endure.

The Global Healthy Living Foundation recently launched a national campaign, “Fail First Hurts” (<http://www.FailFirstHurts.org>), to provide personal perspective on step therapy, or fail first practices by insurance companies. People living with pain associated with RA, chronic or acute pain need to efficiently and adequately address their needs through the medication intended by their physician. We hope that you will consider these people – many of whom live in California – when voting for AB 369.

If you have questions or wish to discuss this further, please call me or our Executive Director, Lou Tharp at 845-348-0400 or email me at sginsberg@ghlf.org or Lou at ltharp@ghlf.org

Thank you for caring about patients and their need for quality access to care in California.

Sincerely,



Seth Ginsberg
President, Global Healthy Living Foundation

