



AMERICAN COLLEGE  
OF RHEUMATOLOGY  
EDUCATION • TREATMENT • RESEARCH

Specialists in Arthritis Care & Research

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July 15, 2014

Massachusetts State Legislature  
Joint Committee on Healthcare Financing  
Rooms 416A and 236  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133  
(Via electronic delivery)

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Healthcare Financing:

On behalf of the American College of Rheumatology, **I would like to express our support for Senate Bill 2096, formerly Senate Bill 477 – An Act relative to patient financial protection.**

We believe that access to treatment should be affordable, reasonable and timely without unnecessary barriers to medically necessary care.

Patients with chronic, disabling, and life threatening conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, and lupus are in jeopardy of losing access to critical biologic medications. Some health insurance companies are moving medically-necessary treatments, mostly biologics, into "specialty tiers" requiring very high patient cost-sharing or co-insurance - usually from 25% to 50% of the cost of the drug. This practice is forcing patients to pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs each month rather than a traditional fixed, flat dollar co-payment. As a result, many patients are underutilizing necessary treatments or going without treatment entirely, contributing to disability and rising health care costs. **SB 2096 addresses this issue by placing limits on those costs to patients.**

The ACR appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. We are committed to advancing excellence in the care of patients with arthritis and rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases, which includes serious conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and other debilitating and potentially-disabling rheumatic diseases. If we may assist you with any additional information or questions, please contact Starla Tanner at [stanner@rheumatology.org](mailto:stanner@rheumatology.org) or by telephone at (404) 633-3777.

Thank you very much for the work you do. **We urge you to vote Senate Bill 2096 out of committee and onto the floor for a vote.**

Sincerely,

William F. Harvey, MD. MSc  
Chair for Government Affairs  
American College of Rheumatology