

Testimony of
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Before the
Washington State Health Care Authority
Prescription Drug Affordability Board Meeting
March 20, 2024

The International Foundation for **Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory** Arthritis (**AiArthritis**), a patient organization led by people affected by **AiArthritis** diseases, is grateful for the opportunity to submit public comments throughout this drug affordability process.

Focus on Patient Outcomes. Immune disorders can be incredibly debilitating and keep those diagnosed from maintaining normal functions and daily routines. Worsened health conditions can result in more frequent doctor visits, the need for invasive medical interventions, and hospitalizations. Patients who identify and maintain effective treatments can resume their normal lives. It cannot be understated that the medications subject to review are life-changing for the patients they treat. Therefore, we urge the committee to keep patient impact at the forefront of its deliberations.

Avoid Impeding Patient Access. As the board reviews drug affordability, we would like to emphasize the importance of maintaining unrestricted access to broad treatment options for patients with complex conditions.

- Patients with complex and chronic conditions often spend years identifying treatments that work for them – it is typical for a patient to try and fail at multiple treatments before finding one that is most effective for them.
- Treatments can work for a specific patient for multiple years but then become less effective, forcing a change in therapies.
- Throughout a lifetime of maintaining a chronic disease, many patients will face switching medications multiple times as their selected treatment becomes less effective to them personally.
- Treatments that are classified as therapeutic alternatives are not guaranteed to work for every patient.

Therefore, health policies mustn't impede access to treatments or lead to fewer options for patients.

Prevent Unintended Consequences to Patients. Focusing solely on the price of drugs ignores the many complicated factors that ultimately drive costs up for patients and oversimplifies a very complex process. Additionally, reviewing only a handful of medications can create further inequities, picking winners and losers among patients and patient populations. If access is impeded or utilization management increased, patients will suffer from unnecessary delays, fewer treatment options, and more barriers to accessing the life-changing care they need.

Patient and Patient Organization Involvement in the Process. Finally, we urge the board to ensure there exists ample opportunity for engagement with patients and patient organizations throughout the drug review process. Collaboration with patients ensures the board truly identifies and addresses patient needs and can help prevent policies that could impede therapeutic access and stymie innovation.

We appreciate all opportunities to collaborate with the board and invite you to lean on us for additional information or guidance.