

March 6, 2017

Rep. Joe Schomacker  
509 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chair Schomacker and members of the committee,

We are writing to urge your support of HF 712, related to interchangeable prescription biologic products. The development of biologic drugs has provided patients and their physicians with access to improved therapeutic options. Biologic drugs are some of the most expensive drugs on the market today. However, as generics have done for small-molecule drugs, interchangeable biosimilars have the potential to increase price competition on older biologic drugs, and result in lower cost burdens for patients.

In order for biosimilars to provide increased access and affordability through competition, state pharmacy laws have to be amended to create the ability for biosimilar substitution at pharmacies. As biosimilar policies are developed, they must focus on ensuring the safety and efficacy of all biologic drugs, whether the original innovator or biosimilar, and policies must also ensure access and affordability of biosimilars for cancer patients.

We appreciate that this bill limits biosimilar substitution to products that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has designated as an interchangeable biologic product. We agree that pharmacy substitution should only happen under the circumstance where the FDA has deemed a product to be interchangeable. We further agree with the proposal to allow physicians the ability to prevent substitution via prescription instructions. In addition, we support the language to require that when there is an interchangeable biosimilar, the prescribing physician must be notified of the actual biologic dispensed within five business days to ensure an accurate and enduring patient medical record.

As interchangeable biologics are approved by the FDA, patients and their providers need a safe and transparent process by which they can receive access to these medications. By creating a new pathway for biologic substitution where none currently exists in Minnesota, this legislation enhances patient access to new and potentially less costly medications. We urge you to support HF 712.

Sincerely,

