



Minnesota House of Representatives
House Health Finance and Policy Committee
477 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 9, 2021

Dear Chair Liebling and Committee Members:

Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare writes in support of HF 1516.

Gillette was created by the Minnesota legislature over 120 years ago to provide treatment for children with disabilities and complex medical conditions. Now an independent nonprofit specialty children's hospital with clinics throughout the state, including in Greater Minnesota, we see patients from every Minnesota county. We focus on conditions that are complex, rare and traumatic. Our patients typically require intense lifelong care and medical intervention due to conditions such as cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, spina bifida, epilepsy, skeletal deformities and rare diseases. The vast majority of our patients have multiple overlying conditions. At Gillette we focus on the care and interventions that will best improve quality of life, functionality and patients' ability to participate in their community.

Many of the specialty drugs coming into the market that are beneficial for Gillette's patient population are biological products or a biosimilar. This legislation protects patient and provider choice related to the prescribing and dispensing of biological products. From a patient perspective biosimilars provide a more affordable option for expensive treatments, including treatment for rare diseases. From a provider perspective it is difficult and expensive for us to maintain several different brands of a biosimilar drug.

As an example, there are now four biosimilar products for the biological drug infliximab: Inflectra, Renflexis, Ixifi, and Avsola. Infliximab is used to treat many diseases, but primarily at Gillette we use it for juvenile idiopathic arthritis that is refractory to conventional disease-modifying drugs. It would be unreasonable for us to keep all four in stock in our pharmacy. Allowing a hospital to choose which biosimilar version to stock allows us to put safeguards in place for safe use. As a specialty provider organization with the expertise in our unique patient population it is important that we have the ability to fully assess biological products and their biosimilars and make a selection based not only on financial considerations for the patient, but also effectiveness and safety.

Clinic locations:

Baxter
Bemidji
Burnsville
Duluth
Mankato
Maple Grove
Phalen
St. Paul
Willmar

We thank Rep. Schultz for authoring this legislation.

Sincerely,



Kristen Beyer, PharmD
Director of Pharmacy Services
Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare

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