



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

February 3, 2017

Senator David Wilson  
Chair, Senate Health & Social Services Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 115  
Juneau AK, 99801

Senator Mia Costello  
Chair, Senate Labor & Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 504  
Juneau AK, 99801

**RE: Support for SB 32, Prescriptions for Biological Products**

Dear Senators Wilson and Costello:

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance) is a coalition of national medical specialty societies representing more than 100,000 physicians and surgeons. We are dedicated to the development of sound health care policy that fosters patient access to the highest quality specialty care. The undersigned member organizations of the Alliance of Specialty Medicine write in support of SB 32 regarding the dispensing of interchangeable biosimilar products.

The Alliance has closely followed the development of federal and state policy related to biosimilars and the safety considerations that should be taken into account as more biosimilar versions of existing biologic medicines become a new treatment option for our patients. **Importantly, SB 32 addresses key policy issues to ensure patient safety is preserved, including physician authority to prevent substitutions and ensuring that the treating physician is notified if another version of the biologic medicine is substituted for the version prescribed by the doctor.**

Specifically, we appreciate that SB 32 does not allow for biosimilar substitution if the prescriber indicates that the script shall be dispensed as written. (p. 2, lines 15-17)

Also, we support that the bill requires notifying the prescribing practitioner of substitution *“within three business days after dispensing the biological product...”*. (p. 2, lines 27-28)

The practice of automatic substitution that is seen with generic drugs is not entirely appropriate for biosimilar products given that they are not simply “generic” versions of biologics. Physicians need to know what medicine their patient receives and therefore, the prescribing physician should be notified whenever a patient’s biologic medicine is substituted. This will help to ensure the accuracy of patient medical records and identify any issues should there be an adverse event.

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American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery • American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American College of Mohs Surgery • American College of Osteopathic Surgeons • American Gastroenterological Association  
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association • American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery • American Society of Echocardiography  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons • American Urological Association • Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons • National Association of Spine Specialists • Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

Advances in medical treatment have transformed the way we fight certain diseases. Biologics, and biosimilars, will continue to be an important treatment option for patients. The Alliance of Specialty Medicine appreciates that SB 32 ensures appropriate safeguards and urges that you advance the bill.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American College of Mohs Surgery  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery  
American Society of Echocardiography  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
North American Spine Society  
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

cc: Members, Senate Health & Social Services Committee  
Members, Senate Labor & Commerce Committee