



Senate Bill 32

Alaska biosimilars legislation would enhance patient access to potentially less costly medications.

SB32:

- would allow substitutions of prescribed biological drugs with less expensive biological products determined by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be interchangeable.
- would require the pharmacist to provide notice to the prescriber of the substitution within three business days.
- would not allow substitution if the prescriber indicates the drug prescribed is medically necessary for the patient or the patient refuses the substitution.

ACS CAN supports SB32 based on three principles:

- **Consent.** Physicians should have the ability to withhold consent for substitution.
- **Notification and recordkeeping.** Physicians should be notified of the biologic substituted to ensure an accurate and enduring patient medical record.
- **Safety and interchangeability.** The FDA is the sole entity responsible for ensuring the integrity and designation of “interchangeable biosimilars.”

Biologics and biosimilars:

Biologic drugs are some of the most expensive cancer drugs on the market today. They have provided cancer patients and their physicians with access to improved treatment options. The unique properties of these drugs can result in precise targeting of cancer cells individually, enabling better clinical outcomes while minimizing debilitating adverse effects.

Biosimilars may offer some potential for increasing access and affordability as they provide competition for the original biologic drugs, similar to what generic drugs do for name-brand drugs. While a biosimilar may be highly similar to an FDA-approved biologic drug, because of the complexities of biologic manufacturing, it is not possible for a biosimilar to be an exact copy of the originator drug.

Federal and state biosimilar policies are needed to ensure safety and efficacy of all biologic drugs, and ensure access and affordability of biosimilars for cancer patients.