

March 2021

Rep. Jennifer Schultz
473 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Schultz,

As Vice President of Pharmacy at Allina Health, thank you for your support HF 1516 as it advances much needed parity in insurance coverage for biosimilar versions of biological medication. This bill would allow health care pharmacies and patients options regarding prescribing and using biological products—ultimately resulting in more patient-centered, quality and timely care.

The lack of reimbursement and coverage parity between brand biological medications and biosimilars increases the risk for patients, requiring the physicians to follow payer set requirements—rather than focusing on the best medication for patients at a reduced cost. Biological medications are a total of 40% of pharmaceutical spending and play a significant role in the prescription drug spending. Biosimilars are a lower cost option that has been proven to have no clinically meaningful difference in safety, purity or potency when compared to biologicals.

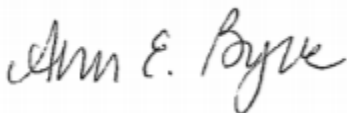
Biosimilars will allow for competition in the market place lowering the cost of medications. We know that patients pay on average, 20% less money for biosimilars compared to brand-name biologics. This is why we believe that patients should have high quality care that will not break the bank—this bill would help us ensure that our work is not being driven by payers, but rather by the needs of those we serve.

HF1516 creates product parity for biosimilars and the reference biologic products by requiring equivalent coverage. This greatly reduces the risks and inefficiencies listed above and eliminates a barrier to biosimilar use. By allowing health systems and physicians determine biological or biosimilar product selection based on their formulary processes, they can promote and maintain patient safety while lower drug costs for patients.

I, and my staff, appreciate your advocacy for HF1516 to allow health care professionals to focus on what truly matters—patients and their care management. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ann Byre
Vice President of Pharmacy
Allina Health