



Advocacy in ACTION

Fighting for People with Arthritis



August 7, 2014

United States House of Representatives Studies Drug Development in the United States

House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) and Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) recently announced a bi-partisan initiative entitled “21st Century Cures: A Call to Action”. The objective of this study is to ensure that the United States remains the health care innovation capital of the world and to identify legislative hurdles to the development of new cures for diseases like arthritis. The study will look at public and private funding of disease research and how to accelerate and incentivize research to find cures; the FDA structure as it relates to developing these cures; and the delivery and cost of developing cures. 21st Century Cures has the potential to accelerate and improve the discovery and distribution of treatments for people with arthritis.

The committee is encouraging citizen input. Please let them know what your treatment experiences have been as a person living with arthritis by e-mail at cures@mail.house.gov.

Idaho Board of Pharmacy to Consider Biosimilar Substitutions

The Arthritis Foundation National Office and the Great West Region submitted comments to the Idaho Board of Pharmacy on proposed rules regarding the substitution of biosimilar drugs for biologics. The Board, acting under its own authority, does not require a legislative change to allow biosimilars. The proposal does not require a pharmacist to notify the prescribing physician of any substitution. The Foundation’s [position statement](#) on biosimilars requires notification and recommends that such notification occur within 24 hours.

Affordable Care Act Court Decisions are Divided

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia has ruled that subsidies to help consumers pay for coverage through health insurance exchanges are illegal. The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, VA has also now ruled that the subsidies are legal.

The cases question whether the Internal Revenue Service is lawfully allowed to provide subsidies to people enrolled in the insurance exchanges established through the Affordable Care Act. The issue is significant because it may impact payments to more than 4.5 million people who bought insurance through the exchanges and are expecting government funded subsidies.

Americans Feelings Toward the ACA Have Cooled

Politico reports that Americans' feelings toward the Affordable Care Act have cooled. The percentage of Americans with an unfavorable opinion of the law jumped eight points: from 45 percent in June to 53 percent in July, according to the latest tracking poll from the Kaiser Family Foundation. At the same time, many Americans want President Obama and Congress to quit paying so much attention to health care and focus on the economy, jobs and the deficit. The poll also found that Americans are split on the Supreme Court's recent ruling in the Hobby Lobby case on contraceptives with 47 percent approving and 49 percent disapproving.

This is a publication from the Arthritis Foundation Advocacy and Access Department

For questions, please contact us at advocacy@arthritis.org

