



**Ann M. Palmer**, President and CEO  
Arthritis Foundation

## **Advocacy in Action**

A couple of months ago, I wrote a letter to the medical director of Medical Mutual of Ohio, expressing concern and requesting a change to the company's new Recommended Authorization Criteria requiring the use of a Preferred Drug, i.e., the injectable TNF antagonist medications, prior to the use of an infusible TNF antagonist agent.

I explained that the Arthritis Foundation advocates for:

- Access to the full range of treatment for all people with all types of arthritis, including inflammatory types such as rheumatoid arthritis;
- Supports access to a full range of treatment options, including various forms of administration; and
- Supports the physician's right to choose the appropriate therapy for his or her patients, and we are opposed to any policy that interferes with the medical decision-making process of the doctor-patient relationship. The choice of therapy is complex and should be determined by the physician based on a number of variables, both medical and patient-centric. These variables include the diagnosis, disease characteristics, prognosis and physician's clinical judgment and experience, as well as factors such as the patient's proximity to the physician's office, mobility and functional limitations.

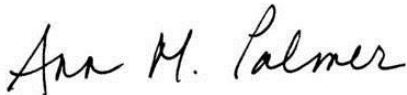
Medical Mutual of Ohio responded quickly and favorably to my inquiry, agreeing to

broaden the range of treatments and, as a result, beginning September 1, 2014, the medical benefit requirement that a trial of a self-administered anti-tumor necrosis factor-alpha agent be attempted prior to treatment with Remicade® was eliminated.

This expansion of treatment options is a win for the millions of people with an inflammatory form of arthritis in Ohio. However, it is not a complete victory, as many viable treatment options are still not included. As we know, people respond differently to the different treatments for inflammatory arthritis and need to have their options open so that they can find the right medication for them.

Because of this, I am continuing the dialogue with Medical Mutual of Ohio to request that they consider broadening their coverage to ensure that there is a complete access to appropriate treatments for all people with inflammatory arthritis in Ohio. I will keep you posted on the results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann M. Palmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann M. Palmer  
President and CEO  
Arthritis Foundation

## **2014 Election Update and How it Affects You**

The 2014 Congressional elections are going to bring about a lot of change for the 114th Congress. Between retirements and the number of vulnerable Members of Congress, there will be lots of freshman Members to educate about arthritis, the Foundation, and the important work we do. [Click here](#) for some important facts and how all this affects you. Once the elections are over, the Arthritis Foundation Advocacy and Access team will need your help in reaching out to all newly elected officials on issues related to arthritis. More information will be sent to all advocates in November!

**Take Action As A Peer Reviewer!**

Earlier this month, Connecticut Ambassador Deane Felter was chosen as one of the Consumer Reviewers for the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program at the [Department of Defense](#). The goal of the program is to fund new and innovative medical research for the benefit of the members of the military and their families. As a Consumer Reviewer, Deane will review grant applications that are proposing new and innovative research. Deane says “participating in the CDMRP program provides an opportunity for me to give back and show my appreciation for all the military does to keep us safe” and being selected as a reviewer was “a very nice honor that came my way due to my relationship with the Arthritis Foundation”. Interested in becoming a reviewer? Check back on our website in early 2015 for more information!

## **New Law Brings Prior Authorization Benefits and Insurance Plan Transparency**

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn has signed into law House Bill 3638 which takes effect on January 1, 2015. The law will provide better access to medications and better information about health insurance coverage of medications for people with arthritis.

The new law will streamline the prior authorization approval time to no more than 72 hours or 24 hours in cases of an expedited coverage determination. It will also require health insurers to provide information to allow consumers to compare the treatment of medications. Consumers would be provided information about the covered prescription drugs, tiering and the cost-sharing structure for each tier and information about how a consumer can obtain specific copayment amounts or coinsurance percentages for a specific plan before enrolling in that plan.

The law was actively supported by the Arthritis Foundation and acknowledged by the bill's sponsor Illinois state Representative Laura Fine.

See: <http://fineforstaterrep.com/gov-quinn-signs-first-of-its-kind-bill-that-requires-transparency-on-the-exchange/>



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