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Written testimony in support of House Bill 1359

Dear Senators of the Committee:

I am a constituent from District 12 with Psoriatic Arthritis who benefitted from being started on biologic therapy without having to go on "fail first" protocol.

The diagnosis of my Psoriatic Arthritis took about 2 years of worsening symptoms. I am a General Surgeon and I trained at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. I had a busy private practice, and the pain and weakness was significantly affecting the ability to clamp instruments, use staplers, lift and maneuver organs and tissue. This affected the ability to perform surgery safely, to be a full partner in my business, and support my family.

When my Rheumatologist came to the diagnosis of Psoriatic Arthritis, it was a relief to have a diagnosis. As we discussed the right treatment for me, she recommended starting a biologic in my particular situation. In 2009, biologics were not as well know, but I was quite desperate for a solution. I did not realize at the time how fortunate I was, as my insurance company did not require a "fail first " Step Therapy protocol.

Starting on biologic therapy first, had a quick and significant effect. I was able to return to full Surgery practice for several years, and then transition to teaching medical students when the timing was right for me.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Susan L. Behen