

ARA PC – Specialty Dispensing – Talking Points

House Bill 1461 - Health Insurance - Coverage for Specialty Drugs - Rheumatologic Conditions

Talking Points:

- The deleterious effects of being forced to use specific pharmacies are many:
 - extensive time talking with pharmacies and “telephone tag”,
 - concerns about mail-order packages of expensive,
 - cold-chain syringes being left on insecure doorsteps at inappropriate temperatures.
- Often times for patients to avoid mail order was to pick up the pen syringes at a specific chain store that had very long wait times after a long day of work.
 - These type of inconveniences can cause patients to miss drug doses, which can cause painful disease flares.
- Patients with rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases pay for delays with their own unnecessary pain and disability.
- They take stop-gap potentially toxic steroids that can provoke diabetes, broken bones, or serious infections which require costly hospitalization.
- Even after finally receiving mail-order medications, for their first doses they wait still longer to schedule in-person injection teaching.
- This bill will help us help our patients by streamlining their care – providing medication and education on injection teaching and handling, at a convenient place from a trusted source i.e. their doctor’s office.
- This year, many patients are moving to biosimilar versions of medication, and we can make that a more efficient and cost-effective experience by dispensing their new biosimilar at the point of care.
- Additionally, we can authorize and dispense new doses when we identify disease flares at the point of care.
- The impact of pharmacy steering is harmful when it deals with the medications that are life changing and life sustaining.
- This is the current paradigm:
 - The state protects patient choice of pharmacy with all other medications -- it’s only the life-changing specialty drug that PBMs and insurance companies can force Marylanders to obtain at certain pharmacies.
- This bill changes that paradigm.