



January 22, 2013

The Honorable Stephen H. Martin
General Assembly Building, Room 311
Capitol Square
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Senator Martin:

Serving the nation's children for 140 years, Children's National Medical Center is a proven leader in the development and application of innovative new treatments for childhood illness and injury. Providing care across the metropolitan Washington area, with locations throughout Northern Virginia, we are the only freestanding pediatric hospital system in the entire region. We are proud to treat children sent to us from all parts of the Commonwealth.

We write in support of HB 1422 (O'Bannon), legislation that will appropriately update laws dealing with important and innovative biologic medicines and includes critical physician-patient notification requirements.

In our facilities and physician offices, we see the benefits of biologics in treating pediatric diseases and debilitating conditions. As use of biologics and biosimilars grows, we applaud legislation that sets appropriate parameters for the prescription, administration, and substitution of these medicines. HB 1422 includes the necessary provisions to allow for physicians to make prescription decisions, for patients to receive medicines as they wish, and for pharmacists to make appropriate, FDA-approved substitutions when providing proper notice.

Delegate O'Bannon's bill also includes record-keeping requirements that will ensure accurate tracking and tracing of biologics and biosimilars. Additionally, HB 1422 will not be overly burdensome to any health care professional or party involved in health care payment or delivery. SB 1285, a similar bill, does not include the important physician notification requirements whenever a pharmacy or insurance company substitutes a biosimilar for the prescribed biologic medicine. It also does not require records of biosimilar substitution to be maintained, which is essential for proper tracking and tracing in the event a patient has a negative response to a substituted product. We hope that SB 1285 is amended to mirror HB 1422.

Thank you for carefully considering the important patient safety policies in these bills. Please feel free to contact us if we can connect you with Children's National Medical Center physicians and other clinicians if we can serve as resources on these remarkable life-changing therapies.

Sincerely,

Kurt Newman
President and Chief Executive Officer