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February 16, 2015

Hon. Scott Schwab
Representative/Chairman
House Insurance Committee
State of Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, Kansas

RE: **House Bill 2176; synchronization of prescription coverage**

Dear Rep. Schwab and Members of the Kansas House Insurance Committee:

I am a physician treating patients from the State of Kansas, and currently serve as president of the Midwest Rheumatology Association. Our group represents rheumatologists in the Kansas City Metropolitan area, as well as Topeka, Lawrence and Wichita Metropolitan areas.

I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 2176, which is an Act concerning health insurance policies providing prescription drug coverage to individuals in Kansas. This bill supports synchronization of prescription coverage for individuals with chronic medical illnesses.

Rheumatologists treat patients with complex medical illnesses that many times require multiple different medications in order to properly treat and control these diseases. Many of these patients are elderly and also take multiple other medications for their other medical conditions. Poor medical adherence leads to poorer outcomes among these individuals. It has been estimated that over $105 billion dollars of avoidable medical costs are incurred due to non-adherence to medications. It has been estimated that medical synchronization can improve adherence to appropriate medical regimens in up to 24% in patients with chronic medical conditions. Medical synchronization would streamline prescription refills for pharmacists and for the patients, allowing all of their medications to be filled on the same day each month. This definitely would improve patient adherence and would save the health care system money that can be avoided by costly medical services such as emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Many of the patients that rheumatologists treat have severe mobility limitations and are hampered in their ability to make frequent trips to pharmacies. By allowing them to fill

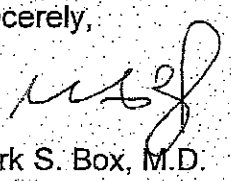
their prescriptions at the same time each month, it makes it more convenient for them to pick up their medications and reduces the risk that they will run out of their medications, due to issues with mobility and ability to get to the pharmacy.

Medication synchronization is an issue that has been taken up by the Federal Government in Medicare Part-D and has proven in other situations to improve medical adherence and prevent avoidable medical costs. There are several barriers currently existing to medication synchronization. Most of this centers on insurance companies and refusal to allow one-time early refills in order to synchronize the patient's multiple medications. In other cases, patients are forced to pay full month copays for only partial fills. This legislation, as proposed, would improve this situation by allowing the synchronization of medication refills, as well as prorating the copay or co-insurance to match how much medication is actually dispensed, if it is less than a traditional 30-day supply. This will helps patients with their financial situation that can be a burden in many cases when a full copay is required for only a partial fill of medication.

Medication synchronization provides a simple and common-sense approach to improving healthcare and well-being of individuals with chronic medical illnesses and it is a measure that is highly supported by the rheumatology community and particularly the Midwest Rheumatology Association.

I would hope that this information will encourage passage of this Bill, which is very important in the proper care of many Kansans with chronic medical illnesses.

Sincerely,



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