March 26, 2018

Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support HB 736 (Bromwell) – Pharmacy Benefits Managers - Pharmacies and Pharmacists - Information on and Sales of Prescription Drugs

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is a non-profit organization with a mission to drive efforts to cure psoriatic disease and improve the lives of those affected. NPF is the leading patient advocacy group for more than 8 million Americans and over 211,800 Maryland residents living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. I write to you to express our support for HB 736, relating to contracts with pharmacies and pharmacists.

HB 736 prohibits a health benefit plan or pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) from restricting a pharmacist or pharmacy from disclosing cheaper alternatives to individuals purchasing prescription medication. With this law, an enrollee would be informed of all available treatment options and their cost as well as alternative methods of purchase. This reasonable approach to full disclosure enables patients to treat their disease at the lowest cost.

High out-of-pocket costs significantly impacts a patient’s access to care. A 2013 study of data collected from NPF surveys found that although roughly 91% of patients with psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis were covered by insurance, the majority spent more than $2,500 per year in out-of-pocket costs for their disease. In fact, some patients spend upwards of $8,000 per year toward cost-sharing obligations. With high out-of-pocket costs already impeding access to care, it is critical policies ensure patients receive their treatments at a fair and reasonable price to both the subscriber and the plan.

This measure ensures patients are not paying more than their insurer when purchasing a prescription drug that is essential to maintaining their health. We thank you for attention on this important matter and support the passage of HB 736. Should you have any questions for NPF regarding this issue please contact Amy Prentice, State Government Relations Manager (aprentice@psoriasis.org).

Sincerely,

Randy Beranek
President and CEO