March 23, 2018

The Honorable Jim Justice
Governor, State of West Virginia
State Capitol, 1900 Kanawha Blvd, East
Charleston, WV 25305

RE: Support HB 4524 (Ellington) - Establishing guidelines for the substitution of certain biological pharmaceuticals

Dear Governor Justice:

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is a non-profit, voluntary health agency dedicated to curing psoriatic disease and improving the lives of those affected. The Psoriasis Foundation is the leading patient advocacy group for the 8.3 million Americans and roughly 63,560 West Virginia residents living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

The introduction of biologic products for the treatment of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis has been the most significant advancement in care for the psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis community in recent decades. Biologics have provided some patients with an effective therapy—many for the first time in their lives. While the community welcomes new and affordable treatments, patients with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are keenly aware of the risks associated with biologics, including suppression of the immune system and the lack of long-term safety data for new treatments.

As this legislation reaches your desk we, the undersigned, urge you to sign this legislation into law. This legislation received bi-partisan support and is the result of all parties working together to achieve a common goal.

In contrast to the case with generic drugs, which are chemically identical to their branded counterparts, biosimilars are not chemically identical to their branded biologics counterparts. As large, complex, molecules derived from living cells using recombinant DNA technology, biologics can never be exactly replicated due to their inherent variability. The NPF believes that legislation concerning biologics is both an access and safety issue, and that neither should be sacrificed for the other; a balance can and has been found. We urge you to sign HB 4524. We appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Randy Beranek
President & CEO