



American Autoimmune

Related Diseases Association, Inc.

www.aarda.org

February 26, 2021
Tennessee State Capitol Commerce and Labor Committee
736 Cordell Hull Building
Nashville, TN 73423

Re: Letter in Support of SB 1397

To the Honorable Members of the Tennessee State Commerce and Labor Committee:

On behalf of tens of millions of Americans who struggle every day with serious illnesses, including autoimmune diseases, the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA) appreciates the opportunity to send this letter as support for SB 1397. We request this letter of support be included as part of the public hearing record.

AARDA is dedicated to the eradication of autoimmune diseases and the alleviation of suffering and the socioeconomic impact of autoimmunity. AARDA is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing a national focus to autoimmune diseases, which are a major cause of serious and chronic health conditions for millions of individuals. AARDA is also the founder and facilitator of the National Coalition of Autoimmune Patient Groups (NCAPG), a coalition of 45 organizations representing numerous diseases. The NCAPG's mission is to convene, support, and amplify the voice of autoimmune disease patients and autoimmune patient groups to enhance capacity, collaboration, and impact through advocacy, education, awareness, and research concerning all aspects of autoimmune disease.

AARDA strongly supports SB 1397 because it protects the life-line to drug affordability that patients need, especially those suffering from serious illness, chronic conditions, and disabilities — including the estimated 50 million Americans with an autoimmune disease. This comes at a time when COVID-19 is eroding jobs, personal finances and overall health for millions of families. It's more important than ever that we stand up for copay assistance.

AARDA [recently conducted a survey of 600+](#) autoimmune disease patients to better understand their experiences surrounding copay assistance. Their responses reinforced the importance of copay assistance programs to patients dealing with autoimmune and other complex conditions. **Over 90% of the patients surveyed stated that copay assistance programs helped them access medications they couldn't afford and allowed them to take their medication as prescribed.**

Please don't take away this lifeline to Tennessee's most vulnerable individuals during a pandemic. Protect copay assistance programs- protect Tennesseans.

Thank you for taking time to listen to the concerns of patients with autoimmune disease and related illnesses. We respectfully ask that you vote in favor of SB 1397. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address listed below.

Sincerely,

Brett M. McReynolds
Vice President, Policy and Programs
AARDA
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