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June 23, 2020

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BCBST POLICY HOLDERS BRACING FOR IMPACT
Patients Face Price Increases & Reduced Access to Care

[Memphis, TN] [June 23, 2020] – Continuing with its campaign to alert of dangerous changes to BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee (BCBST) prescription policies, the [Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations](#) (CSRO) is amplifying the voices of patients who will be harmed as benefits are stripped away on July 1. One patient, Tracy Burress (an arthritis patient in Jackson, TN,) is sharing her story about how she will be facing extreme difficulties to receive Remicade infusions as she has every eight weeks since 2014. When the BCBST policy takes effect, her physician will no longer provide infusion services leaving limited options for her necessary therapy.

“Memphis and Nashville are hours away. I cannot afford to travel so far to get treatment in a place I don’t know from medical personnel who don’t know me,” explained Tracy Burress. “I dealt with this in 2009 too when I lost my job, and my insurance. The pain was so great, my husband had to dress me. Now, I am facing the same problems. Yet, I have insurance, that I pay for, making it impossible for me to receive the treatments I need. It is scary and I don’t know what to do.”

The BCBST policy (scheduled to begin on July 1) forces patients to utilize its preferred specialty pharmacies for infusion therapies making it nearly impossible for treatments to be conducted in physician offices – under their care.

“I just do not understand why this is happening,” Burress said. “Insurers should be helping keep customers healthy, not putting up roadblocks to care, the way BCBST has to my doctor and me. I feel like I’m being penalized because of my disability/illness.”

In addition to sharing Tracy Burress’ story, CSRO is alerting leaders of many of the largest employers in Tennessee. Further, it has sent [communications sent previously to the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and leaders of BCBST](#).

“As physicians on the front lines of medical care we will always fight for our patients – just as we hope business leaders, insurers, and politicians will fight for them too,” Dr. Madeline Feldman, CSRO President stated. “Tracy Burress – and all patients deserve better – BCBST must do better for them, especially in times like these as COVID-19 presents new challenges.”

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