



July 15, 2011

Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker of the House,
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I appreciate the difficulty of addressing the current budgetary issues our nation faces and agree there are many areas where federal spending can be trimmed. However, I write to urge that you consider the long-term impact on Medicare beneficiaries of further reducing Medicare reimbursement of Part B drugs.

It is my understanding that the federal debt ceiling negotiations have discussed a reduction from ASP+6% to ASP+4%. I am a practicing rheumatologist in a large practice with a significant Medicare patient population. I write to provide you with practical information on what this proposed policy change means in the doctor's office and to share my grave concern for its impact on my many Medicare patients.

Attached please find an invoice from our distributor for purchase of Rituxan, an important drug in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and a drug approved for patients who have failed other treatments. Our cost for an infusion, which is necessary every 4-6 months, is \$6,020.33. The Medicare Allowable reimbursement (J9310) is \$6,106.86. Thus, our margin per infusion is only 1.44% -- meaning a reduction from ASP+6% to ASP+4% results in a loss on each infusion for each patient. Unfortunately, our practice cannot afford to absorb such a loss and our patients would lose access to this product, which is one of the main choices physicians make for those who have failed other treatments.

This is only one example of the many Part B drugs our patients rely on to treat rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis. The cost to the system of not appropriately addressing these debilitating diseases is great. I implore you to consider these long term costs, but also to consider the practical reality of asking physicians to absorb such cuts. We cannot afford to purchase drugs we are forced to lose money on, especially for drugs that patients require at regular intervals. This proposed cut to Part B drugs results in patient access problems as well as risks jobs as you push this burden on physician practices.

Thank you for your serious consideration of my concerns. I am available to provide additional examples or discuss this matter with you personally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Schweitz', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Schweitz, M.D.
President,
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations

INVOICE



2297 SOUTHWEST BLVD STE. D
GROVE CITY, OH 43123

TEL: (800) 942-5999

PLEASE REMIT TO:
Priority Healthcare Distribution, Inc.
DBA: CuraScript Specialty Distribution
P.O. Box 599307
Charlotte, NC 28290-3307

DEA# RP0334540 FED. TAX ID# 59-3761140

PERMIT# 23:01933
BILL TO: ARTHUR & RHEUM OF PALM BEACH
ARTHUR & RHEUM OF PALM BEACH
1515 N FLAGLER DR #620
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33401

SHIP TO: ARTHUR VIRSHUP, MD
ARTHUR & RHEUM OF PALM BEACH
1515 N FLAGLER DR #620
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33401

ST. REC# ME20217

FBI SHIPPING POINT

INVOICE DATE	INVOICE NO.	CUST NO.	CUSTOMER P.O. NO.	TERMS	ORDER NO.	REP NO.	STATE REG NUMBER	DEA NUMBER	PAGE
6/07/11	3844412	31476	06/06/11	NET 90 DAYS	3200842	304	MS20217	AV5870482	1

QUANTITY	SHIPPED	ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	NDC/UPC NO.	AWP	PRICE	EXTENSION	2nd
2		098781	RITUXAN 500MG 50ML SDV DRP SMP	EA	50242005306		2,980.36	5,960.72	
Manufacturer:			U-O-M PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES PO# 601822	Date Recd:	5/31/11	* See statement below			

Pedigree Available when Required
For Federal and State Requirements all pharmaceutical products are purchased directly from the manufacturer.
In cases where product is purchased from a national wholesaler a product pedigree is attached.

SUBTOTAL:	5,960.72
TOTAL IN PAID BY, CHECK OR APT BY 9/05/11:	5,960.72
FORFEITED CASH DISCOUNT:	66.61
TOTAL:	6,020.33

RITUXAN

Cost 6,020.33

Medical Allowable 19310

6106.86

MARGIN

1.44%

Prescription purchased the specific unit of the prescription drug listed on the invoice directly from the manufacturer, and the specific unit of prescription drug was shipped by the manufacturer directly to the person authorized by law to administer as defined in s. 465.003, Florida Statutes, or a member of an affiliated group, as described in s. 499.0121 (6) (h), Florida Statutes, with the exception of a repackager. Cost

NET DUE DATE: 9/05/11

Prices for items on this invoice may reflect discounts or other reductions in price, which may be subject to subsequent audits or other reductions or adjustments. To the extent required, a refund report for certain such discounts or reductions on cost reports or claims filed with federal or state health care programs, and you should retain this invoice and other documentation for the period and make such information available to federal or state health care program officials upon request. Claims for defects, damages, shortages, will not be honored unless reported within 30 days of receipt. Claims for billing errors will not be honored unless reported within 10 days from date of invoice. Past due invoices subject to 1.5% interest charges per month which is annual percentage rate of 18%. FBI SHIPPING POINT.

INVOICE TOTAL \$6,020.33