

June 8, 2023



CRA Membership E-blast

Hello Shanna

The California Rheumatology Alliance remains dedicated to providing updated news and resources to our membership. We appreciate and encourage any feedback to assist in our service to our members. What do YOU want us to talk about? We'd love for these newsletters to be used as an opportunity for us all to learn from each other, so if there's anything specific you're interested in learning more about from other people involved with the California Rheumatology Alliance, let us know by emailing info@calrheum.org.

[Visit our Website](#)

2023 CRA MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2023 CRA Annual Membership is open for renewal! Pay your annual dues easily online for exclusive access to special membership benefits such as discounted rates on your meeting registration, tickets for amusement parks, movies, and stage shows as well as curated information surrounding news and policies that directly impact the rheumatology community.

[Pay your 2023 CRA Membership Dues now](#)

SUMMER FUN WITH TICKETSATWORK.COM

It's Employee Wellness Month this June and we understand the need for you and your associates to be mentally and physically fit in order for you to perform at their highest level. We have partnered with Ticketsatwork.com and they have hot deals on all things health and wellness for your associates to take advantage of this summer as well as offers to share as they start planning their summer vacation with savings on flights, hotels, rental cars, and even cruises. Plus, we've got your associates covered with access to awesome gifts for grads and dads.

If you haven't signed up yet, click [become a member](#) and enter our company code: **ALLIANCE17**

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The California Legislature has just passed the halfway point of the Session. All bills are required to move out of the "House of Origin" by June 2nd and both Houses finished this work a day early.

The major health related bill being debated was [SB 525 \(Durazo\)](#). This bill would establish a \$25/hour minimum wage for all healthcare workers. Number provider and business groups were strongly opposing the bill which is being sponsored by SEIU. The author was having problems securing enough votes to pass the bill so she took an amendment to stagger the increase in minimum wage to go to \$21 for 2024 and then to \$25 in 2025. Even with this amendment the bill was struggling to get the necessary 21 votes. After intense lobbying on both sides, the bill ended passing with a minimum of 21 votes. CRA has an Oppose position on the bill.

Below are details of the outcomes for other bill CRA is advocating.

[AB 874 \(Weber\)](#) – Co-Sponsoring – Held in Assembly Health Committee

Working with the Hemophilia Council of California, Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute, and the ALS organization. This bill would clarify the law to allow patients to use funds received from any source for the purpose of helping them afford medications to count those funds towards their out-of-pocket requirements. Unfortunately, this bill was not heard in the Assembly Health Committee due to concerns with the Chair of the Committee. The bill is eligible to be heard in January of 2024.

[SB 621 \(Caballero\)](#) – Oppose unless Amended – Passed Senate

This bill would add biosimilars to the list of medications a plan may require a patient “try and fail” before approving the medication originally prescribed by the treating physician. CRA took an Oppose unless Amended position over concerns the bill would force patients to “try and fail” a biosimilar when they were stable on an existing medication. CRA successfully secured amendments to clarify patients stable on a medication would not be required to “try and fail” a biosimilar. We worked closely with CSRO to obtain this amendment. The bill passed the Senate after our amendment was placed in the bill.

[AB 948 \(Berman\)](#) – Support – Passed the Assembly

This bill would permanently make the law cap co-pays for medications at \$250 for a 30-day supply. This bill is in the Senate Health Committee

[SB 70 \(Wiener\)](#) – Support – Passed the Senate

This bill prohibits health plans from limiting or excluding coverage for a drug, dose of a drug, or dosage form of a drug on the basis that drug, dose of a drug, or dosage form is different from the use approved for marketing by the FDA. This bill is in the Assembly.

[SB 598 \(Skinner\)](#) – Support – Passed the Senate

This bill allows physicians who have had 90% of their prior authorization requests approved by a given health plan to not go through prior authorization for the subsequent 12 months. This bill is in the Assembly

[SB 524 \(Caballero\)](#) – Oppose – Held in Senate Appropriations Committee

This bill would allow pharmacists to prescribe medications without any physician involvement based on the results of specified CLIA tests for conditions such as COVID-19, influenza, conjunctivitis, sexually transmitted infections, and strep throat.

[SB 873 \(Bradford\)](#) – Support – Passed the Senate

This bill would require the cost sharing for a patient for each prescription drug be calculated at the point of sale based on a price that is reduced by an amount equal to 90% of all rebates received in connection with the drug being prescribed. This bill is in the Assembly.

[AB 765 \(Wood\)](#) – Support – Held in Assembly Appropriations Committee

This would protect specified medical titles such as rheumatologist to only allow physicians to use those terms. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on the Suspense File.

[AB 470 \(Valencia\)](#) – Support – Passed the Assembly

This bill would allow physicians to count language courses towards their CME requirements. This bill is in the Senate Business and Professions Committee.

[AB 564 \(Villapudua\)](#) – Support – Passed the Assembly

This bill would allow physicians to use electronic signatures when applying to become a Medi-Cal provider. This bill is in the Senate.

[SB 815 \(Roth\)](#) – Oppose unless Amended – Passed the Senate

This is the Medical Board sunset review bill. Once every five years the Legislature reviews each board to look at making any changes. This bill was recently amended to make a number of changes to the Medical Board. Two of most interest are:

- Raises physician licensing fees from \$863 to \$1,269. The reasoning for the increase is the Medical Board is on the verge of financial insolvency and the fee increase is needed to keep the Board from going bankrupt.
- The Medical Board has historically been composed of both physician and non-physician board members. The board has always had a physician majority. This bill adds additional board seats and changes the makeup from a physician majority to a non-physician majority.

WE NEED YOUR VOICE!

We are asking CRA members to share patient stories related to problems with accumulator programs. If you have any patient stories or are interested in learning more about CRA advocacy efforts, please email Tim Madden at madden@mqadvocacy.com or Shanna Castro at susui@calrheum.org

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