



## CRA March 2021 Newsletter

Greetings!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The California Rheumatology Alliance remains dedicated to providing updated news and resources to our membership related to COVID-19. We appreciate and encourage any feedback to assist in our service to our members.

If there are any topics you are interested in and would like for us to cover via webinar, please email [info@calrheum.org](mailto:info@calrheum.org).

[Visit our Website](#)

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Ring in a new year brings a fresh start, a clean slate and a brand new membership year! To register to become a member or renew your CRA Membership, please visit our website to pay your 2021 dues:

[MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION](#)

As a reminder, when you become a CRA Member, you also have access to various benefits including membership to Tickets At Work. From healthy workout subscriptions to grocery services, there are amazing options to ensure our safety as California continues its stay-at-home mandate. To sign up, follow the instructions below:

1. Click the link below
2. Fill out the form to become a Tickets at Work member (please use the same email address as you do for CRA communications)
3. Enter Company Code "ALLIANCE17"
4. Enjoy the savings!

[TICKETS AT WORK](#)

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The California Legislature has just passed the bill introduction deadline. CRA is in the process of reviewing the bills that may impact you and your patients. There are dozens of bills in the health area that are being reviewed. Below is a brief snapshot of a few bills we will be advocating on this year.

The top priority for CRA will be [AB 347](#) by Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula. CRA is partnering with the Arthritis Foundation and the Chron's and Colitis Foundation to sponsor the bill. This bill will make changes to the step therapy process including establishing a number of standard exceptions for when a patient does not need to go through step therapy as well as putting in place definitive time frames for when a health plan must give providers an answer to prior authorization and step therapy exception requests. ***It will be important for us to share patient stories about their challenges with the step***

*therapy process. Please let us know if you have a patient(s) that have struggled with getting the medications they need due to going through step therapy. These stories are a critical way to show Legislators the need for AB 347.* The newsletter contains additional ways to identify patient stories.

The California Chronic Care Coalition, which CRA is a member, is sponsoring [AB 752](#) (Nazarian) to require health plans to provide patients and physicians, upon consent from the patient, access to a “real time benefit tool” that will assist the patient in understanding the cost to acquire the needed medication which will improve a patient’s ability to begin therapy without delay.

[SB 568](#) (Pan) would lower out-of-pocket costs for consumers by requiring that certain medicines and benefits used to treat chronic disease be covered without subjecting patients to a deductible.

You may recall over the past few years’ legislation requiring physicians to disclose in writing to patients any remuneration received from pharmaceutical or medical Device companies. [AB 1278](#) (Nazarian) has been introduced this year doing the same thing and promises to be another battle.

[AB 80](#) (Burke) would conform state law to be consistent with federal law as it relates to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans many practices may have received last year. This bill would exclude income from being included in state taxes if those loans were forgiven. The bill also allows businesses to deduct up to \$150,000 of business expenses that were paid for using forgiven PPP or Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) funds.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on any of these bills, please contact Tim Madden at [madden@mqadvocacy.com](mailto:madden@mqadvocacy.com).

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