

March 10, 2022



California  
**Rheumatology**  
Alliance

## CRA Membership E-blast

Greetings!

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.

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

## CRA MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2022 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 2022 Membership Dues today!

## CRA 18TH ANNUAL MEETING

We're so excited to announce that after 2 years, we'll be heading back to the city by the bay for our 18th Annual Medical & Scientific Meeting!

**May 14-15, 2022**  
**SAN FRANCISCO MARRIOTT MARQUIS**  
*San Francisco, CA*

# SAVE THE DATE

## CRA 18TH ANNUAL MEDICAL & SCIENTIFIC MEETING

MAY 14-15, 2022  
MARRIOTT MARQUIS SAN FRANCISCO



Join us in the City by the Bay this May

Please visit our website to view the agenda + book your hotel room at <https://www.calrheum.org/events>. We will be opening registration for both in-person and hybrid attendance soon!

Visit our website

## CRA MEMBER ACTION REQUEST

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is requesting feedback from the public about pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and their impact on drug pricing and access to medication. To support the physician community in responding, CSRO has developed **talking points** for rheumatologists.

View Talking Points

The deadline to submit comments is **Monday, April 25, 2022**. Your feedback is important as it may encourage the FTC to proceed with a review of the industry and recommend reforms to Congress.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**What is new in CRA advocacy:** The Legislature introduced more than 2,100 bills for 2022. The CRA advocacy team has reviewed and taken positions on a number of bills. Below I highlight a number of bills. This will be a very busy year for advocacy. We would love for more CRA members to get involved in advocating for these bills. If you would like to get involved in advocacy whether it be learning more about the bills, contacting your local legislator on important advocacy issues, or even testifying on bills being considered please contact Shanna or Tim

CRA is co-sponsoring follow up legislation to AB 347 from last year to try and push through improvements to the step therapy and prior authorization processes that were taken out of AB 347. This bill is [AB 1880 \(Arambula\)](#) and contains the more controversial parts of AB 347 which should provide a challenging battle for us this year. These include:

- Applying step therapy exceptions to Medi-Cal plans, where step therapy is allowed
- Requiring reporting by health plans on their utilization management practices (such as how many prior authorization and step therapy requests they deny and approve each plan year)
- Requiring health plans to use a clinical peer where someone of the same or similar specialty is reviewing the appeal of a step therapy exception request or prior authorization request (ex. a

Other bills introduced which CRA will be actively working on include:

**[SB 958 \(Limon\)](#) – CRA Position – Support**

This bill addresses three growing areas of concerns as it relates to in-office injections:

- "White bagging" where payers are requiring patients to obtain their medications from a pharmacy specified by the payer and the medications are then sent to the physician for injection/infusion,
- "Brown bagging" where payers require patients to obtain their medications directly from a pharmacy and the patient brings them to the physician's office for injection/infusion, and
- The growing trend where payers are requiring patients to have their medications injected/infusion at home.

SB 958 would make it more difficult for payers require patients to be subjected to the three situations described above.

**[SB 853 \(Wiener\)](#) – CRA Position – Support**

This bill, sponsored by the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, requires health plans and insurers to cover denied medications, including the prescribed dose, for the duration of an appeals process. This bill also strengthens California's prohibition on non-medical switching by applying that same prohibition to a prescribed dose or dose level of a drug. SB 853 continues our work to better ensure patients who are stable on their medications can stay on their medications.

**[AB 2352 \(Nazarian\)](#) – CRA Position – Support**

The California Chronic Care Coalition, which CRA is a member, is sponsoring this bill 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.

The CRA advocacy team is excited for what lies ahead in 2022. If you would like to get involved in advocacy whether it be learning more about the bills, contacting your local legislator on important advocacy issues, or even testifying on bills being considered, please contact Tim Madden at [madden@mqadvocacy.com](mailto:madden@mqadvocacy.com)

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