

April 1, 2010

The Honorable William Monning
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 2352 (Speaker Pérez) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Monning:

On behalf of the California Healthcare Institute (CHI), whose more than 250 members include our state's premier life sciences companies and academic research institutions, I am writing in support of AB 2352, a bill that would extend coverage for anti-rejection medication under the Medi-Cal program for up to two years following an organ transplant.

Currently under the Medi-Cal program, there are certain patients that qualify for Medi-Cal benefits solely due to end-stage renal disease. These patients require dialysis and kidney transplantation. If not for their end-stage renal disease diagnosis, these patients would be ineligible for Medi-Cal coverage. Under current law, these patients can receive life-saving dialysis and kidney transplantation, and up to one year of immunosuppressive medication. Immunosuppressive medications hold the body's immune system at bay so that the patient does not reject the implanted organ, and are commonly referred to as anti-rejection medications.

CHI member companies are at the heart of the biomedical research and development that produces treatments to ensure that a patient's body does not reject an organ in the years following a successful transplantation. Our biomedical researchers in the San Francisco and San Diego areas have tackled this vexing problem for several decades now. Our member companies know that our treatments are only effective when patients have access to them.

AB 2352 would extend the period for a patient who qualifies for anti-rejection medications under Medi-Cal due to end-stage renal disease from one year to two years. Currently, the federal Medi-Care program provides for three years of coverage for these essential life-saving treatments, and AB 2252 would bring California closer to conformity to this standard of care for patients who have no other alternatives. By extending the time a patient has access to anti-rejection medications, the state will be allocating a few additional dollars to insure the larger investment of the organ transplantation. This will also give the patient additional recovery time so that they can be more appropriately prepared to re-enter the workforce and hopefully secure private insurance to cover their anti-rejection medications for as long as they are needed.

CHI strongly supports AB 2352. This measure provides access to life-saving therapies for Californians after organ transplants, supports the research and development in the state for anti-rejection treatments, and brings the state more closely in line with federal Medi-Care standard of care guidelines.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Pizarro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sandra Pizarro
Vice President – State Government Affairs

CC: Chair & Members, Assembly Health Committee
Speaker of the Assembly John A. Pérez
Assembly Republican Caucus