



Ohio Association of Rheumatology Legislative Newsletter November 2016

STATE & FEDERAL – ELECTION EDITION

Post-Election Advocacy

The OAR has been preparing to engage lawmakers post-election as session in the House and Senate is scheduled to reconvene beginning next week. Step therapy and biosimilar substitution legislation are the two main priorities the OAR has been advocating for since educating lawmakers back in April at the Joint Capitol Day in Columbus with the Arthritis Foundation.

- **Step Therapy (HB443/SB243):** Both bills are still in their original committees waiting to be discussed and called for a vote. The OAR and other advocates have been targeting committee members and the Senate Medicaid Committee Chair, Sen. Dave Burke, to ask for the bill to be heard. Getting the bill to move through both chambers with few session days left will prove to be a challenge, but with enough support it can be done.
- **Biosimilar Substitution (HB505):** Meetings with state senators, the chamber in which the bill now sits, have been productive and informative. Legislators on the Senate Health Committee have generally expressed support for the bill. Bill sponsors are working hard to make HB 505 a priority to pass before the end of the year.

As always, OAR legislative staff will continue to monitor all relevant legislation and will update OAR membership as required.

View the [Legislative Calendar](#).

“Fair” Drug Pricing Ballot Initiative Fails in California, Ohio Next to Decide

Ohioans may remember the Ohio Drug Price Relief Act that the Ohio Supreme Court ruled invalid due to questionable signatures gathered by the Aids Healthcare Foundation back in August. That same group also led an initiative in California that successfully made it onto the November 2016 ballot.

However, the initiative, California’s Proposition 61, was defeated 54 percent to 46 percent. The Act was designed to enable the state and state agencies to pay the same prices for prescription drugs as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA negotiates drug prices with companies and typically pays 20 to 25 percent less than other agencies for prescription drugs.

Ohioans can expect to get their chance to vote on the issue as Ohio’s Secretary of State Jon Husted has verified a second-round of signatures and has ordered the initiative to appear on the next general election ballot in 2017.

Trump White House

What does it mean now that the businessman from New York, Donald J. Trump, will be the next President of the United States? For starters, President-Elect Trump has been a vocal advocate of repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and made a promise to do so in his first 100 days in office.

Trump also talked about rising drug prices and advocated drug imports. Trump's staff expressed interest in what they call market solutions to curb the growth of drug prices, a hospital lobbyist said, though a brand drug lobbyist said a Republican in the White House drastically curbs the threat of action on drug price controls.

Also, with the pharmaceutical stock index jumping more than 5 percent on Wednesday morning following Trump's triumph and the GOP sweep, lobbyists assume it will kill the prospect of the Part B drug-price demonstration.

Trump Healthcare Reform Highlights:

- Allow individuals to fully deduct health insurance premium payments from their tax returns under the current tax system.
- Allow individuals to use Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).
- Remove barriers to entry into free markets for drug providers that offer safe, reliable and cheaper products.
- Require price transparency from all healthcare providers.
- Modify existing law that inhibits the sale of health insurance across state lines.

View the [Complete Reform List](#).

Congressional & State Incumbents Hold Ohio

The Republican majorities in the U.S. House and Senate were considered at-risk by many political analysts going into election night on Tuesday. However, not much changed throughout the United States, including Ohio.

Ohio U.S. Senator and incumbent Rob Portman (R) won with 58 percent of the vote. The trend continued on the U.S. House side as all 16 contested races finished with the incumbent winning re-election (12 GOP, 4 DEM).

Trickling down to the State House and Senate races, all 99 House incumbents were re-elected (66 GOP, 33 DEM). Only one upset occurred on the Senate side (30th District) as retired Navy Seal Frank Hoagland (R) beat incumbent State Senator Lou Gentile (D), ending the election with 14 Republicans and two Democrats winning.

View the [Complete Election Results](#).

Save the Date: Capitol Day – May 4, 2017

Presented by:

Ohio Association of Rheumatology and Arthritis Foundation
A Joint Arthritis Access & Advocacy Day at the Ohio Statehouse

More details to come.