SafeBiologics

ALLIANCE *for* SAFE BIOLOGIC MEDICINES

ASBM Advisory Board Members Convene on Physician Notification

On May 24, ASBM Chairman **Dr. Richard Dolinar** convened a working group of **Advisory Board members** to discuss the elements of a physician notification policy for biosimilars that prioritizes patient safety above all else. In addition to Dr. Dolinar, the working group included Dr. Philip P. Gerbino, Dr. Harry L. Gewanter, Dr. Brett Johnson and Dr. Robert Yapundich.

Members of the working group discussed the differences between generics and biosimilars and emphasized that those differences called for a biosimilars policy that should require a treating physician to be notified as soon as possible after a biosimilar has been substituted for the prescribed biologic.

All members of the working group acknowledged that it is generally accepted practice in the physician community for a pharmacist to automatically substitute a generic for a name brand medicine. However, Dr. Yapundich pointed out that biologics are a different class of medicines where even a small change in manufacturing can result in a different medicine altogether. Dr. Yapundich also reminded the group that as a neurologist when dealing with neurodegenerative disorders “ground lost, is ground lost” i.e., you can’t regain what is lost when a patient is on an ineffective medicine.

In discussing next steps, working group members agreed that there is a great deal of education needed within the patient, provider and physician communities and that perhaps national roundtables made up of physicians, pharmacists and patients may be a good first step. Ultimately members seemed to coalesce around the idea of developing a policy recommendation for the **ASBM Steering Committee** in a step-wise approach.