State of Arkansas
90th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2015

A Bill

SENATE BILL 4

By: Senators J. Cooper, Hester
By: Representatives Lundstrum, Womack, Sullivan, Ladyman, B. Smith, Tosh, Wallace

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CONCERNING TERMINALLY ILL PATIENT ACCESS TO INVESTIGATIONAL DRUGS, BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS, OR DEVICES; TO CREATE THE RIGHT TO TRY ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CONCERNING TERMINALLY ILL PATIENT ACCESS TO INVESTIGATIONAL DRUGS, BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS, OR DEVICES; AND TO CREATE THE RIGHT TO TRY ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 15, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 20 — Right to Try Act

20-15-2001. Title.

This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Right to Try Act".

20-15-2002. Findings.

It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that:

(1) The process of approval for investigational drugs,

biological products, and devices in the United States often takes many years;

(2) Patients who have a terminal disease do not have the luxury of waiting until an investigational drug, biological product, or device receives final approval;

(3) The standards of the United States Food and Drug Administration for the use of investigational drugs, biological products, and devices may deny the benefits of potentially life-saving treatments to terminally ill patients;

(4) The State of Arkansas recognizes that patients who have a terminal disease have a fundamental right to attempt to pursue the preservation of their own lives by accessing available investigational drugs, biological products, and devices; and

(5) The use of available investigational drugs, biological products, and devices is a decision that should be made by the patient with a terminal disease in consultation with his or her physician.

20-15-2003. Definitions.

As used in this subchapter:

(1) "Eligible patient" means a person who meets the requirements of eligibility in § 20-15-2004;

(2) "Investigational drug, biological product, or device" means a drug, biological product, or device that:

(A) Has successfully completed phase I of clinical trials but has not been approved for general use by the United States Food and Drug Administration; and

(B) Remains currently under investigation in a United States Food and Drug Administration clinical trial;

(3) "Physician" means an individual licensed to practice medicine in the State of Arkansas under the Arkansas Medical Practices Act, § 17-95-201 et seq., § 17-95-301 et seq., and § 17-95-401 et seq.; and

(4) "Terminal illness" means a disease or illness that, without life-sustaining measures, can reasonably be expected to result in death or a state of permanent unconsciousness from which recovery is unlikely.

20-15-2004. Eligibility.

In order for a patient to access an investigational drug, biological

product, or device under this subchapter, a physician must document in the patient's medical record and chart that the patient:

(1) Has a terminal illness;

(2) Has considered, in consultation with a physician, all other treatment options currently approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration;

(3) Has been unable to participate in a clinical trial for the terminal illness within one hundred miles (100 mi) of the patient's home address, or has not been accepted to the clinical trial within one (1) week of the completion of the clinical trial application process;

(4) Has been given a prescription or recommendation by a physician for an investigational drug, biological product, or device;

(5)(A) Has given informed consent in writing for the use of the investigational drug, biological product, or device.

(B) If the patient is a minor or lacks the mental capacity to provide informed consent, a parent or legal guardian may provide informed consent on the patient's behalf; and

(6) Has received written documentation from a physician that the patient meets the requirements of this subchapter.

20-15-2005. Availability.

A manufacturer of an investigational drug, biological product, or device may, but is not required to, make its investigational drug, biological product, or device available to eligible patients under this subchapter.

20-15-2006. Costs.

A manufacturer of an investigational drug, biological product, or device may:

(1) Provide an investigational drug, biological product, or device to an eligible patient without receiving compensation; or

(2) Require an eligible patient to pay the costs associated with the manufacture of the investigational drug, biological product, or device.

20-15-2007. Insurance coverage.

An insurance company may, but is not required to, provide coverage for an investigational drug, biological product, or device.

20-15-2008. Professional licensing.

A licensing board shall not revoke a license, fail to renew a license, or take any other action against a physician's license solely based on a physician's recommendation, prescription, or treatment with an investigational drug, biological product, or device.

20-15-2009. Remedy.

An official, employee, or agent of the State of Arkansas that blocks or attempts to block access of an eligible patient to an investigational drug, biological product, or device is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

20-15-2010. Immunity.

A manufacturer of an investigational drug, biological product, or device or person or entity involved in the care of an eligible patient using the investigational drug, biological product, or device is immune from civil liability for any harm done to an eligible patient resulting from the investigational drug, biological product, or device so long as the manufacturer, person, or entity is complying in good faith with this subchapter, unless the manufacturer, person, or entity fails to exercise reasonable care.