



April 14, 2008

Reference No.: SASC08036b

HAND DELIVERED

The Honorable Durell Peaden, Jr.  
Chairman, Health and Human Services Appropriations  
Room 222  
Senate Office Building  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Chairman Peaden:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association (PPTA) to support the Alpha One Screening and Detection Program (Program).

Alpha-1 anti-trypsin deficiency (Alpha-1) is a hereditary condition that may result in serious lung disease in adults and/or liver disease in infants, children and adults. Alpha-1 occurs when there is a severe lack of a protein in the blood called alpha-1 antitrypsin (AAT) that is mainly produced by the liver. The main function of AAT is to protect the lungs from inflammation caused by infection and inhaled irritants such as tobacco smoke. The low level of AAT in the blood occurs because the AAT is abnormal and cannot be released from the liver at the normal rate.

Alpha-1 can cause liver disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and panniculitis, a skin disease created by an excess of white blood cell products. Panniculitis frequently causes painful lumps under or on the surface of the skin.

The Program has successfully screened more than 12,000 Floridians and identified more than 1,400 individuals who are predisposed to developing Alpha-1. One of the benefits of early detection is that it allows individuals to begin treatments and preventive measures that may slow the progression of lung disease. This results in better health outcomes for the individual and fewer State funded lung transplants.

The House's Budget eliminates the funding for the Program. I would ask that you maintain your position or consider full restoration of the funding during conference.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Speir". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Speir  
Manager, State Affairs