

Allergy & Asthma Network

Mothers of Asthmatics

May 15, 2003

Dear PADAC Committee:

My name is Sandra Fusco-Walker and I am the mother of three young adults who have grown up dealing with asthma and allergies. Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.

After volunteering with the Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics (AANMA), I joined the organization and I am now Outreach Education Coordinator. AANMA is a nonprofit, patient education and advocacy organization dedicated to eliminating death and suffering due to allergies and asthma.

Neither AANMA nor myself has any financial interest in the companies represented in this issue. AANMA pays my salary and has paid for all my expenses to attend this meeting. AANMA is supported by family and medical professional donations and restricted and unrestricted federal and pharmaceutical grants.

I am here to represent the organization's views.

Historically, improvements in asthma treatment have come in increments for which asthma patients and their families are eternally grateful. Xolair represents the first biologic for the treatment of asthma; a gigantic leap from traditional molecular therapies.

Over the last few years, AANMA has followed the research on Xolair. We've answered patient questions about Xolair on our toll free help line (800-878-4403) and through e-mail at our website (www.breatherville.org) We have received questions such as "When is Xolair going to be available?" "What does it do?" "How does it work?" "Is it a cure?" "Will this mean I can get a dog?" and "How much will Xolair cost?"

Teaching families about Xolair is an opportunity to teach about the human immune system and the importance of ongoing, proactive, medical care. AANMA does not view Xolair as shotgun therapy or a reason to abandon other effective asthma treatments such as allergen avoidance, immunotherapy, inhaled corticosteroids and bronchodilators, and other medications.

Instead, we view Xolair as an important new option for treatment that, once available, will liberate adolescents and adults whose asthma defies existing therapies. While patients trust FDA to look at Xolair from a safety and efficacy viewpoint, patients are hoping that Xolair, and access to Xolair, will unshackle their lives and remove the ever-present weight and unpredictability of asthma.

Thank you for your attention.

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