



**Statement of the American Plasma Users Coalition (A-PLUS)  
And  
National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)  
In Opposition to Highmark J-500 Policy  
March 23, 2011**

As national and international patient organizations many of whose patients depend upon plasma protein therapies to live healthy and productive lives, the **American Plasma Users Coalition (A-PLUS) and the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)** supports the Immune Deficiency Foundation's campaign to make sure that no patients with primary immunodeficiency diseases and other disorders that require immunoglobulin (IgG) therapy are forced to switch IgG therapies without medical cause. Studies have shown that switching IgG therapies exposes a significant number of patients to adverse reactions that can range from mild to severe and could even include death.

Medical and research entities recognize that Immunoglobulin therapies have no generic equivalency and are not interchangeable. Each individual patient experiences each IgG therapy differently. These therapies are biologics and are not chemical based compounds that can be duplicated easily. The "Fail First" policy instituted by Highmark will place adult patients who are stable on a "non-preferred" IgG therapy at significant risk for harm. The health of patients, who are not having any medical problems with IgG therapy should not be put in jeopardy in order to determine if the preferred brand "works."

The undersigned organizations represent patients who rely on plasma protein therapies like IgG and oppose this policy that will adversely impact patient lives. Highmark should articulate a policy that "does no harm" to patients.

**GBS/CIDP Foundation International  
Committee of Ten Thousand  
Hemophilia Federation of America  
Immune Deficiency Foundation  
Jeffrey Modell Foundation  
National Hemophilia Foundation  
Platelet Disorder Support Association  
Patient Services Incorporated**

And

**National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)**

