



March 16, 2020

The Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We are contacting you urgently regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the threat that this global health crisis will exacerbate already significant shortages of necessary prescription medications. On behalf of the Best Medicines Coalition, a non-profit national alliance of 28 patient organizations, together representing millions of Canadian patients, we urge you and your Cabinet colleagues, along with provincial and territorial leaders, to address critical drug supply issues as you develop strategies and take actions to protect Canadians.

Canada's drug supply is extremely fragile due to a complicated mix of factors, including manufacturing-disruptions and discontinuations. Currently, as reported by Health Canada, more than 2,000 out of approximately 13,000 drugs are in short or no supply. These shortages have proven difficult to mitigate, sometimes with life threatening implications.

We are gravely concerned that factors related to COVID-19, including impending disruptions resulting from manufacturing closures and production interruptions will further deplete our drug supply. This global supply situation will surely further prompt actions by United States law makers to pursue bulk importation of drugs meant for Canadians to the United States. In fact, even without the pressure of COVID-19, this importation threat which has been gaining momentum, has critical implications for Canadian patients. Simply put, bulk importation to the United States is not viable and would put patients on both side of the border at risk, a position we outlined to the Food and Drug Agency in a March 9, 2020 submission.

Canada must take necessary actions to prepare and protect our drug supply, and we urge you and your colleagues, including provincial and territorial leaders, to give this immediate priority. We ask you to consider and implement actions to address this situation and protect our supply internationally.

Canadians must be assured that securing our drug supply is among your top priorities along with other critical COVID-19 health and economic implications. We request an update on measures underway and planned and that a technical briefing by officials for relevant stakeholder groups including representatives of patient organizations, be convened to discuss and inform. We look forward to your prompt reply and offer our assistance in any way moving forward.

Yours sincerely,

John Adams
Chair, Board of Directors, Best Medicines Coalition

Encl.

cc: The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health
Dr. Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister of Health Canada
The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Provincial and Territorial Premiers and Health Ministers
The Honourable Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party
Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois
Elizabeth May, Parliamentary Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Marci Surkes, Executive Director, Policy and Cabinet Affairs, PMO



About the Best Medicines Coalition

The Best Medicines Coalition (BMC) is a non-profit national alliance of 28 patient organizations, together representing millions of Canadian patients, with a shared goal of equitable, consistent and timely access to safe and effective medicines for all Canadians. With interests in drug approval, assessment, reimbursement, safety and supply issues, BMC engages in issue education, consensus building and advocacy. As a coalition, BMC strives to ensure that patients, and the organizations that represent them, have a strong, meaningful voice and participation in health policy development, specifically regarding pharmaceutical care and patient outcomes. Formed in 2002 as a grassroots alliance, BMC registered under the Not-for-profit Corporations Act in 2012.



Alliance for Access to Psychiatric Medications
 Arthritis Consumer Experts
 Asthma Canada
 Better Pharmacare Coalition
 Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada
 Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
 Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients
 Canadian Breast Cancer Network
 Canadian Cancer Survivor Network
 Canadian Council of the Blind
 Canadian Epilepsy Alliance
 Canadian Hemophilia Society
 Canadian Mental Health Association
 Canadian PKU & Allied Disorders

Canadian Psoriasis Network
 Canadian Skin Patient Alliance
 Canadian Spondylitis Association
 Crohn's and Colitis Canada
 Cystic Fibrosis Canada
 Fighting Blindness Canada
 Health Coalition of Alberta
 Huntington Society of Canada
 Hypertension Canada
 Kidney Cancer Canada
 Lymphoma Canada
 Millions Missing Canada
 Ovarian Cancer Canada
 Parkinson Canada