



November 15, 2021

Federal Health Mandate: Put patient values, needs and improved outcomes at the centre of health and pharmaceutical policy

The Best Medicines Coalition (BMC) is a national alliance of patient organizations, together representing millions of patients, with a shared goal of equitable, timely and affordable access for all patients in Canada to safe and effective drugs and related treatments. As the federal government embarks on a renewed mandate, we call for proactive and meaningful engagement where patients and the organizations that represent them are recognized as legitimate and integral contributors, and patient-informed evidence is valued and incorporated. Patients must be at the core of all considerations on important policy options, including the following:

- **Comprehensive pharmaceutical care for all:** Too many Canadians have little or no insurance coverage for drugs, and many face extended delays awaiting review and reimbursement decisions. The important work of understanding needs and how to best provide comprehensive pharmaceutical care must continue. We need an efficient and streamlined infrastructure aimed at improving patient care, delivering equity but at a high level with a comprehensive range of drugs and related treatments available to all based on medical need. Addressing critical disparities in drug coverage must be prioritized while ensuring that no patient loses coverage provided through private insurance plans. We need a whole-of-health approach, instead of a focus on managing drug budgets. We urge the federal government to focus on patient care and improved outcomes as it pursues important initiatives such as the creation of the Canadian Drug Agency and a national prescription drug list (formulary), working in consultation with all stakeholders including patients and the organizations that represent them. Read more, [here](#).
- **Comprehensive and fully funded rare disease strategy:** We support a broad approach to a long-overdue Canadian rare disease strategy, and the Best Medicines Coalition calls for the development of a comprehensive policy that first and foremost focusses on saving and transforming patients' lives. For patients and caregivers, the journey starts before diagnosis and moves through the stages of management and gaining access to necessary treatments, as well as many additional supports and services. A rare disease strategy must reflect this reality and have at its heart a patient care mandate, including sustaining and improving the lives of patients and addressing health system sustainability from this starting point. Read more, [here](#).

- **Pharmaceutical pricing that prioritizes patient access and affordability:** Many patients and their families live with a significant burden of prescription drug costs which can cause personal and financial stress in addition to living with health conditions and/or disability. We urge the federal government to address drug prices but caution that measures must also support the timely introduction of a comprehensive range of medicines and vaccines in Canada and protect access to clinical trials sponsored by drug developers. Quite simply, Canadians need effective and balanced policies whose primary goal must be sustaining and improving the health and wellbeing of current and future patients. Read more, [here](#).
- **Protection of Canada's supply of drugs and vaccines.** Patients in Canada rely on a secure supply of medicines and vaccines. Effective and proactive policies to avoid drug supply disruptions and shortages must be pursued, again with the goal of meeting patient needs and improving health outcomes. We support measures to expand Canada's domestic manufacturing capacity of drugs and vaccines to safeguard against critical shortages. In addition, proposals in the United States to facilitate bulk importation from Canada of prescription drugs meant for Canadians continue as a significant threat which must be addressed. Read more, [here](#).



About the Best Medicines Coalition

The Best Medicines Coalition is a national alliance of patient organizations, together representing millions of patients, with a shared goal of equitable, timely and consistent access for all Canadians to safe and effective medicines that improve patient outcomes. The BMC's areas of interest include drug approval, assessment, and reimbursement, as well as patient safety and supply issues. As an important aspect of its work, the BMC strives to ensure that Canadian patients have a voice and are meaningful participants in health policy development, specifically regarding pharmaceutical care. The BMC's core activities involve issue education, consensus building, planning and advocacy, making certain that patient-driven positions are communicated to decision makers and other stakeholders. The BMC was formed in 2002 as a grassroots alliance of patient advocates. In 2012, the BMC was registered under the federal Not-for-profit Corporations Act.



Alliance for Access to Psychiatric Medications
 Asthma Canada
 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 Cystic Fibrosis Treatment Society
 Canadian Epilepsy Alliance
 Canadian Hemophilia Society
 Canadian PKU & Allied Disorders
 Canadian Psoriasis Network
 Canadian Skin Patient Alliance
 Canadian Spondylitis Association

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 Crohn's and Colitis Canada
 Cystic Fibrosis Canada
 Fighting Blindness Canada
 Health Coalition of Alberta
 Huntington Society of Canada
 Kidney Cancer Canada
 Lymphoma Canada
 Medical Cannabis Canada
 Medicines Access Coalition – BC
 Migraine Canada
 Millions Missing Canada
 Ovarian Cancer Canada
 Parkinson Canada