Minister of Health | Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

JAN 0 8 2018

Mr. Dave MacKenzie, M.P.
Oxford
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. MacKenzie:

Thank you for your recent correspondence concerning expediting the drug funding process for patients with myeloma.

In my mandate letter, the Prime Minister has asked me to work with my provincial and territorial counterparts to improve access to necessary prescription medications. This important work includes reducing the cost of prescription drugs and making them more affordable for Canadians. When Canadians are in good physical and mental health, they are able to live healthier and happier lives.

In Canada, the management of pharmaceuticals is a shared responsibility among the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The federal government is responsible for assessing the safety, efficacy and quality of drugs before approving them for sale in Canada. The provincial and territorial governments are responsible for the delivery of health care for their residents, including determining which drugs are reimbursed and under what conditions for their eligible populations.

Once Health Canada authorizes a drug for use in Canada, the provincial and territorial drug plans and cancer agencies then decide if the drug will be eligible for public reimbursement. To inform this decision, the public drug plans and cancer agencies use the recommendations and advice of the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH), which assesses the clinical and cost-effectiveness of drugs and issues non-binding formulary listing recommendations to participating public drug plans and cancer agencies. Prior to listing a drug, each public drug plan and cancer agency considers the recommendation by CADTH and other factors, such as program mandate, jurisdictional priorities and budget impact, before making its drug coverage decision. As a result, the advice of CADTH may result in variations in drug

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coverage between provinces and territories. For further information on the current public listing and reimbursement status of treatments for myeloma, you may wish to contact the provincial and territorial ministries of health.

Health Canada is working to align its review process with health partners and to expand its priority review process to better respond to health care system needs. This will involve both internal improvements and collaboration with CADTH to better align their respective drug review processes. Through regulatory improvements, enhanced partnership, and better integration of drug review processes, the Government of Canada will help support timely access to new and innovative drugs of proven therapeutic benefit. These improvements will provide health system partners, including the provinces and territories, with more efficient and timely access to the information needed to make informed decisions that impact the health of Canadians.

The Government of Canada also recently announced measures to modernize the way drug prices are regulated to help Canadians access affordable treatments. The Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) is a federal quasi-judicial tribunal mandated to protect Canadian consumers from excessive patented drug prices. Through the PMPRB, the Government of Canada regulates maximum allowable prices of patented drugs. For the first time in more than 20 years, the Government is updating the Patented Medicines Regulations which, together with the Patent Act, provide the PMPRB with the tools it needs to protect consumers from excessive patented drug prices. You can read more about the proposed measures in the Canada Gazette, Part I, Vol. 151, No. 48, available at http://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2017/2017-12-02/pdf/g1-15148.pdf.

Again, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P.