

May10, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC, MP  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We are long-time patients and patient advocates who support proposed changes to the PMPRB. We are aware that two individuals designated to represent patients on the PMPRB have publicly opposed these changes. We have carefully read their open letter, press release, and template letter urging patients to write their MPs and we are writing to present a different perspective.

We base our views on our experience as patients, on many years of direct support and advocacy work with other patients in Canada and beyond, and on our familiarity with the literature on drug development and drug policies. All of the patients' groups and public interest health groups we work with maintain financial independence from the pharmaceutical industry. Unlike many patient advocates, we are therefore free to take positions on drug policy based solely on research evidence and the lived experience of patients.

We support the proposed changes to the PMPRB for three main reasons:

- The constant upward spiral of drug prices prevents increasing numbers of patients from gaining access to needed drugs, putting their lives and well-being at risk. Changing the list of comparator countries used to establish drug prices is a sensible strategy to protect Canadians.
- Excessively high drug prices distort the allocation of health resources across the board, threatening the sustainability of the publicly-funded health care system on which all patients depend. To sustain the public health care system, Canada needs a regulatory tool to align drug prices and drug policies with countries that have similar health care systems.
- The Canadian government needs to stand up to the pharmaceutical industry's threats that companies will reduce the number of research and other jobs, deny new lifesaving drugs, and end clinical trials at our research hospitals if changes to the PMPRB are implemented. The industry has a history of using the vulnerability of patients to bully governments for financial advantage. Its profits and tactics are recognized globally as serious impediments to health policies in the public interest; this needs to change.

We urge the federal government to enact reforms to the PMPRB and to institute a universal pharmacare plan.

Sincerely,

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cc: The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health  
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance  
The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development  
The Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science and Sport  
Douglas Clark, Executive Director, PMPRB  
Mitch Levine, Chair, PMPRB