Taking action on drug shortages during Covid-19 – open letter

https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy14261

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Pharmaceuticals, prescribing, cannabis, drugs

Dear Minister Jean-Yves Duclos,

We are writing to you today to alert you to a significant issue that is being faced in many provinces across Canada and the need for urgent action. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having a strong healthcare system, but it has also exposed some significant vulnerabilities.

As you are aware, the supply of drug products has been severely disrupted due to global supply chain disruptions and new demand patterns. This has led to shortages of essential medications, including antibiotics, analgesics, and chemotherapy agents, which are critical to the treatment of patients with COVID-19 and other conditions.

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has been monitoring this issue and has been in touch with provincial and territorial healthcare leaders to understand the scope of the problem and the impact on patients.

We are concerned that the current supply chain issues may be exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic, which has led to increased demand for certain medications. This has resulted in a situation where there is a shortage of certain medications, particularly in the areas of infectious diseases and oncology.

As you know, the federal government has been working with provincial and territorial governments to address this issue, including through the establishment of a national pharmaceutical strategy. However, we believe that there is a need for more immediate action to ensure that patients have access to the medications they need.

We recommend that the government consider the following actions:

1. Increase funding for Canadian pharmaceutical companies to support increased production of essential medications.
2. Establish a national stockpile of critical medications to ensure that patients have access to necessary treatments in times of shortage.
3. Work with international counterparts to ensure that Canadian patients have access to medications that are not available domestically.
4. Provide support to healthcare providers to ensure that they have the necessary resources to treat patients with COVID-19 and other conditions.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to ensure that patients have access to the medications they need.

Sincerely,

Canadian Medical Association