



OPEN LETTER

October 8, 2013

The Hon Hugh Flemming
Minister of Health
HSBC Place, P. O. Box 5100
Fredericton, NB E3B 5G8

Dear Minister Flemming,

It has been almost 10 months since The Canadian Association of PNH Patients originally corresponded with your office regarding the implementation of a Prescription Drug Insurance plan which would include a Catastrophic Drug component for the province of New Brunswick.

Since then, we have been both patient and hopeful that your government's commitment and next steps would be timely and help all New Brunswickers who do not have a prescription drug plan. Our hope was fueled by a visit to the Legislature in June where **you made a public commitment to us and the people of New Brunswick to begin rolling out parts of a Catastrophic Drug Program as early as this fall.**

Minister, you are well aware that Soliris is the first and only treatment for PNH that effectively prevents the premature destruction of red blood cells and thereby significantly reduces the development of life-threatening complications. Quite simply, PNH kills. Soliris saves lives.

Soliris is currently publicly funded for PNH in 25 countries - including the US, Japan, the European Union (including Greece), Turkey and Latin America. In January 2009, Soliris was approved under priority review by Health Canada. Since then, all provinces – including New Brunswick – agreed to make funding for Soliris available. It is only in New Brunswick that Soliris is not accessible to PNH patients who depend on public funding, because there is still no Catastrophic Drug Program.

The Canadian Association of PNH Patients has offered you a no-cost solution to help PNH patients access to the treatment they need which would obligate private insurers to follow the government's leadership and cover drugs that are currently on the Drug Formulary. Minister you are aware that many other jurisdictions such as Quebec have this requirement.

Your officials are claiming that more consultation with business is required before you can move forward with such a solution when in fact, the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA) is well aware of this issue and has set up a pooled sharing program so private payers are not adversely affected. An industry wide pooling framework has been established to spread the risk of recurrent, high cost prescription drug claims across all participating insurers.

In June when we met you were receptive to expediting the implementation of this solution, but regrettably your Ministry, has since decided to turn a blind eye to our economical and achievable recommendation.

To date, no action whatsoever has been taken regarding its implementation process while many New Brunswickers continue to be without answers and deeply concerned about how they are going to get the necessary treatment they need to live healthy lives.

New Brunswick is the last province in Canada to implement such a policy and your neighbour to the east, Prince Edward Island, was able to apply this program for constituents within a six month timeframe.

As I have said to you before, New Brunswick patients with PNH cannot and should not wait one more day, let alone one more year, for this program. Your government's plan is nothing more than a deceitful election strategy and plays with people's emotions and lives - mocking the definition of what the Canadian health care system represents.

To say patients suffering from this terrible disease are disgruntled would be a vast understatement. I think it is fair to say that if they were able to pack up their lives and families and move away from this province that is so lacking in compassion and integrity, they would do so in a minute.

The Canadian Association of PNH Patients is calling on you and Premier Alward to immediately move forward and implement our suggested no-cost solution and provide all New Brunswickers with a detailed outline, agenda and time line of the Prescription Drug Insurance plan.

I look forward to your timely response and action to my correspondence.

Regards,



Barry Katsof
Founder & President
www.pnhca.org

c/c The Hon. David Alward, Premier, Government of New Brunswick
Mr. Marc Léger, Deputy Minister of Health, Government of New Brunswick
Ms. Leanne Jardine, Executive Director, Pharmaceutical Services, Government of New Brunswick
Brain Gallant, Leader of the New Brunswick Liberal Party
Donald Arseneault, MLA, Official Opposition critic for Health