

Access to cancer drugs in Quebec **Months added to patient survival can make a real difference !**

Montreal, June 3, 2015 – In response to yesterday's publication of the new reimbursable drugs list, the *Coalition Priorité Cancer au Québec* is asking the Minister of Health and Social Services to speed up revision of the new drugs evaluation and listing process.

"Added months can make a serious difference in a patient's survival," points out Serge Dion, cancer survivor and chairman of the *Coalition Priorité Cancer au Québec's* Patients and Survivors Committee. "For example, a few extra months or more can give patients a chance to participate in a new clinical research protocol for an innovative treatment or obtain an enhanced new drug. It is also an opportunity for patients to spend more time with their loved ones, such time often being of greater quality. How many patients do we see who used to have a life expectancy of just a few months and now, years later, are still among us," states Serge Dion.

"For the well-being of patients, it is essential to speed up availability of the best cancer drugs. Compared to the other Canadian provinces, Quebec has fallen behind with respect to cancer drug coverage; this discriminates against Quebec patients," contends the *Coalition Priorité Cancer au Québec's* president Nathalie Rodrigue, T.M.

The Coalition welcomes Bill n° 28 which henceforth gives Health and Social Services minister Gaétan Barrette the power to negotiate agreements for the listing of new drugs liable to generate drug cost savings. The Coalition's president would remind us of Premier Philippe Couillard's stated intention to have Quebec be part of the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, whose members include the other Canadian provinces, for the purchasing of drugs.

Coverage of two new drugs, while others pending

Two new cancer drugs have been added to Quebec's Drug List, i.e. Gazyva (chronic lymphoid leukemia) and Xofigo (prostate cancer) following recommendations by the *Institut national d'excellence en santé et services sociaux* (INESSS). The Coalition is pleased with this decision. However, the INESSS report provides little information regarding three cancer drugs still under review: Imbruvica™ (lymphoma), Istodax™ (lymphoma), Perjeta™ (breast cancer). Imbruvica is presently the subject of negotiations at the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance to make it available shortly in the nine other provinces, while Perjeta™ already is. These drugs, like many others for that matter, are unfortunately not available in Quebec.

About the Coalition Priorité Cancer au Québec

Coalition Priorité Cancer au Québec was founded in 2001 to protect, support and give a strong voice to people affected by cancer (patients, survivors, informal caregivers, their

families and their loved ones, as well as cancer-related community organizations and health professionals) and to help organize the fight against cancer. The Coalition supports the achievement of the mission of its community and volunteer members and patients groups. Because of the contribution of these organizations and members, the Coalition's membership represents close to 1.5 million people.

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Source : Coalition Priorité Cancer au Québec

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