

VIA EMAIL (pharmaceutical.taskforce-groupedetravail.pharmaceutique@hc-sc.gc.ca)

May 28, 2026

Mr. Martin LeBlanc and Ms. Michelle Boudreau
Co-Chairs, Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences Sector Task Force

Subject: Cancer Clinician recommendations to the Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences Sector Task Force

Dear Mr. LeBlanc and Ms. Boudreau,

On behalf of members of the Cancer Clinician Advocacy Forum (CCAF), we are writing to commend the establishment of the Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences Sector Task Force and to urge that equitable access to cancer treatment remain a top priority in its work. CCAF is a national network of cancer clinicians, including physicians, nurses, and pharmacists, working to reduce barriers to timely diagnosis and equitable access to new therapies and optimal cancer care across Canada.

CCAF welcomes the Task Force's mandate to support reliable and sustainable access to pharmaceutical products in Canada while also identifying made-in-Canada solutions that strengthen the life sciences sector. Its first objective is especially important in oncology, where timely access to innovation can have immediate and life-altering consequences for patients. CCAF hopes the Task Force will give serious consideration to the barriers facing cancer patients, particularly given that in 2026 alone, an estimated 254,100 Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer and 87,900 will die from the disease.ⁱ

CCAF encourages the Task Force to consider practical and high-impact recommendations that would improve patient access to new cancer therapies. CCAF members see firsthand the consequences when promising treatments are available in other countries but not Canada, or worse, approved for use in Canada but remain out of reach because of prolonged review, negotiation, and funding timelines. Canadians wait more than two years longer to access new medicines than patients in Europe and in the United States.ⁱⁱ For patients facing a life-threatening disease, those delays can mean disease progression, diminished quality of life, or lost chances for survival. Canada must do better.

In our view, a stronger Canadian life sciences industry must be measured not only by investment and sector growth, but also by whether patients can receive needed treatments in a timely and equitable way. CCAF therefore urges the Task Force to recommend actions that streamline drug

review and funding processes, reduce duplication of efforts, and support more consistent access for patients across jurisdictions. These actions should include:

- Greater reliance, where appropriate, on trusted foreign regulatory decisions and expanding use of rolling reviews in the regulatory process
- Expanding accelerated negotiation pathways at the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (pCPA) beyond Project Orbis medicines to include all cancer medicines with Health Canada priority review status
- Implementing accelerated funding models like Ontario's FAST pilot across Canada for all cancer medicines with Health Canada priority review status
- Establishing a national benchmark to ensure public drug plans provide access to cancer therapies within a defined timeline of Health Canada approval, regardless of where a patient lives.

CCAF recognizes that the Task Force has been asked to consider both access and competitiveness. These objectives are mutually reinforcing in cancer care. A system that enables earlier diagnosis, reduces delays, and improves uptake of innovation will better serve patients while also making Canada a more attractive environment for research, development, and investment. Equitable and timely access to cancer treatment should therefore remain a top priority throughout the Task Force's deliberations and recommendations.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering input on behalf of CCAF members. We would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Task Force as it develops recommendations to the Government of Canada. By keeping equitable access to cancer treatment at the centre of this work, the Task Force can help deliver important improvements for patients and families across the country.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sandy Sehdev and Dr. Nancy Nixon
Co-Chairs, Cancer Clinician Advocacy Forum (CCAF)
admin@cancerclinicianadvocacy.ca

CCAF Members

Dr. Aalok Kumar (BC)	Dr. Michael Fung-Kee-Fung (Ontario)
Dr. Amirrtha Srikanthan (Ontario)	Dr. Mita Manna (Saskatchewan)
Dr. Andréanne Leblanc (Quebec)	Dr. Moira Rushton-Marovac (Ontario)
Dr. Arif Awan (Ontario)	Dr. Nancy Nixon (Alberta)
Dr. Brandon Sheffield (Ontario)	Dr. Nathalie Daaboul (Quebec)
Dr. Catriona Buick, RN (Ontario)	Dr. Nathaniel Bouganim (Quebec)
Dr. Christa Slatnick (Manitoba)	Dr. Olexiy Aseyev (Ontario)
Dr. Cyrus Hsia (Ontario)	Dr. Rebecca Auer (Ontario)
Dr. David Stewart (Ontario)	Dr. Rosalyn Juergens (Ontario)
Dr. Elizabeth Faour (Newfoundland)	Dr. Sandeep Sehdev (Ontario)
Dr. Guy Desmarais (Ontario)	Dr. Scott Edwards (Newfoundland)
Dr. Haider Samawi (Ontario)	Dr. Sharlene Gill (BC)
Dr. Hamid Mithoowani (Ontario)	Dr. Silvana Spadafora (Ontario)
Dr. Jason Wentzell (Ontario)	Stephanie LeLond, RN (Manitoba)
Dr. Joanna Gotfrit (Ontario)	Dr. Stephanie Snow (Nova Scotia)
Dr. Joy McCarthy (Newfoundland)	Dr. Vladimir Djedovic (Ontario)
Dr. Karen Gelmon (BC)	Dr. Yvette Drew (BC)
Dr. Martin Chasen (Ontario)	

ⁱ Canadian Cancer Society. Cancer statistics at a glance. Available at: cancer.ca/en/research/cancer-statistics/cancer-statistics-at-a-glance (accessed May 15, 2026)

ⁱⁱ Canadian Health Policy Institute (CHPI) (2024). Waiting for new medicines in Canada, Europe, and the United States 2018-2023. Canadian Health Policy. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.54194/QQVC3893>.