Cancer Clinician Advocacy Forum

Le Forum de cliniciens en cancérologie pour la défense des intérêts

VIA EMAIL

September 28, 2026

Honourable Uzoma Asagwara
Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care
Government of Manitoba

Subject: Improving timely and equitable access to cancer care across Canada

Dear Minister Asagwara,

On behalf of the members of the Cancer Clinician Advocacy Forum (CCAF), we are writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the upcoming Federal-Provincial-Territorial Health Ministers' Meeting in Manitoba this October. We urge you to prioritize faster and more equitable access to optimal cancer care on the agenda. Specifically, we encourage you to work toward a pan-Canadian standard under which cancer therapies receive public coverage within 45 days of a negotiated price agreement through the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (pCPA). We also encourage the development of a pan-Canadian standard for earlier implementation planning for new cancer therapies.

CCAF is a national network of cancer clinicians working to improve timely and equitable access to high-quality cancer care. Our members see firsthand how prolonged review, negotiation, and funding timelines can limit patients' treatment options and create avoidable uncertainty for families and care teams.

CCAF is encouraged by recent progress in recognizing that access to life-saving and life-enhancing innovations in Canada remains too slow. Promising initiatives include Ontario's Funding Accelerated for Specific Treatments (FAST) pilot program, the expansion of the pCPA's Early Negotiation Process, and the recommendation of the Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences Sector Task Force that people in Canada should have access to innovative medicines without lengthy delays once Health Canada has assessed them for safety and efficacy.

As cancer clinicians representing nearly every jurisdiction in Canada, we see the inequities patients face based on their postal code. In Quebec, for example, the average time between the completion of a pCPA negotiation and public listing is 44 days, whereas patients in Prince Edward Island wait an average of 662 days for public coverage following a pCPA negotiation, nearly two additional years. Greater accountability is needed to ensure that jurisdictions participating in a pCPA negotiation make cancer treatments publicly available to patients within a defined timeframe, reducing the postal-code lottery that too often determines access to optimal cancer care.

Thank you for your leadership. We hope you will champion this issue in your role as Chair of the upcoming Health Ministers' Meeting in October. We would welcome a follow-up conversation to provide further detail on our proposal and discuss priorities informed by our members' experience caring for people with cancer across Canada.

Sincerely,



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