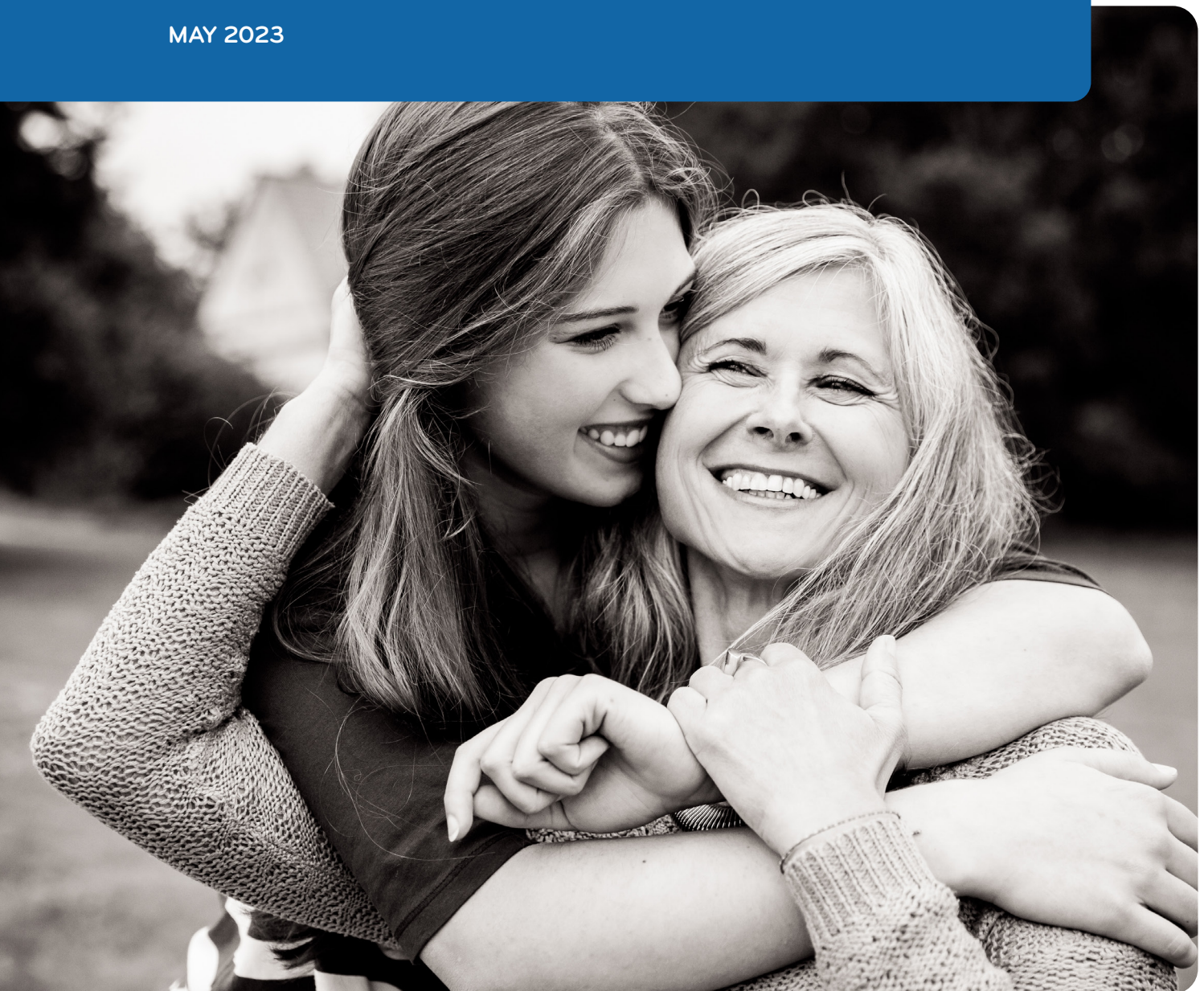


SUBMISSION

WRITTEN SUBMISSION ON BILL 15—
AN ACT TO MAKE THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES MORE EFFECTIVE

MAY 2023



May 31, 2023

Committee of Health and Social Services

Committee of Health and Social Services
National Assembly of Québec
1045, rue des Parlementaires
Québec (Québec) G1A 1A3

Via email: csss@assnat.qc.ca

Members of the Committee on Health and Social Services,

On behalf of Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC), please accept our submission for the parliamentary consultations on Bill 15—An Act to Make the Health and Social Services more effective.

As one of Canada's most innovative sectors, we make substantial contributions to the Québec life science cluster and healthcare system.

In this submission, IMC outlines recommendations to improve access to innovative medicines in the healthcare system by:

- Improving innovative drug supplies in the healthcare system.
- Maintaining access to innovative medicines in an exceptional context specific to each patient.

There is a tremendous opportunity to improve our healthcare system, create jobs and grow our economy through industry and government collaborations.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet in the near future to discuss strengthening and sustaining Québec's healthcare system.

Sincerely,



Pamela C. Fralick
President

ABOUT INNOVATIVE MEDICINES CANADA

Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC) is the national voice of Canada's innovative pharmaceutical industry representing research-based pharmaceutical companies.

We advocate for policies that enable the discovery, development and commercialization of innovative medicines and vaccines that improve the lives of all Canadians. We support our members' commitment to being valued partners in the healthcare system as well as the broader research and innovation ecosystem.

As an industry, we are in the business of hope. Today's pharmaceutical discoveries are leading to improved health outcomes through personalized medicine with diagnoses, practices and treatments increasingly tailored to individual patients. Our innovations provide Quebecers with value: value to patients and their families, value to our healthcare system and value to Canada's economy.



BRINGING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the health landscape in Canada. While the governments across the country have demonstrated their ability to react to an unprecedented health crisis, doing so has also sharpened the focus on domestic capacity and innovation in the healthcare system.

Data is at the heart of the innovations that can impact healthcare delivery, and today's healthcare system should rely on strong data infrastructure. In that sense, IMC congratulates the Government of Québec for tabling the now chapter 5 of the Québec Laws of 2023—An Act respecting Health and Social Services Information and amending various legislative provisions. We also commend the members of the National Assembly for the constructive debate on this topic and in passing the bill into law. This new Law will be the backbone of healthcare services, enabling healthcare professionals to have a complete view of a patient's health history.

The other part of the transformation lies in the administration of healthcare services. The pandemic has demonstrated the critical importance of human resources in the delivery of healthcare. IMC understands that Bill 15 aims to drastically transform the organization of healthcare services in Québec and recognizes the importance and scope of that transformation.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Improve patient access to innovative medicines within the healthcare system.

IMC recommends that the Government of Québec put in place measures to ensure that all Quebecers have a fair and equitable access to all innovative medicines subject to a listing agreement, irrespective of where he is treated.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Maintain access to innovative medicines in an exceptional context specific to each patient.

IMC recommends that the Government of Québec maintain its current exceptional access pathways and does not restrict it as currently drafted in Bill 15.

RECOMMENDATION 1

IMPROVE ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE MEDICINES IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

Since the Government joined the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance (pCPA), access to innovative medicines within a hospital setting is provided through two main channels: 1) innovative medicines are purchased in accordance with the government's procurement rules or 2) innovative medicines are purchased through a listing agreement following negotiations with pCPA. Unfortunately, the delays in access to innovative medicines in Canada and Quebec has increased significantly since then, reaching an average of 732 days from the time a manufacturer receives its Notice of Compliance from Health Canada.

The current environment is prone to create uneven access throughout Québec. For example, patients in a specific administrative region can access some innovative treatments, while others in a neighbouring region can't. Although hospitals need to make accessible all medicines that INESSS is recommending on the Liste des établissements, it is often not the case in practise.

Bill 15, which aims at creating Santé Québec, is an opportunity to improve access and consistency of coverage across the province.

IMC recommends that the Government of Quebec put in place measures to ensure that all Quebecers have a fair and equitable access to all innovative medicines subject to a listing agreement, irrespective of where he is treated.

RECOMMENDATION 2

MAINTAIN ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE MEDICINES IN AN EXCEPTIONAL CONTEXT SPECIFIC TO EACH PATIENT.

In sections 334 and after of Bill 15, the Ministry of Health and Social Services seems to have concerns in the recourse to the exceptional access to innovative medicines and intends to restrict access only in specific situations.

It is important to note that the non recognition of a therapeutic value from INESSS does not mean that a therapy is not efficient and safe or that it can not suits the specific and unique needs of a patient.

The existing measures of access in the current legislation already provides restrictions to healthcare professionals such as it must me demonstrated that the severity of the patient condition is considerable, and that the chosen treatment is one of last resort.

Innovation in medical practices is mostly driven by physicians and healthcare professionals. Clinicians who are also researching innovative ways to treat patients should be able to access innovative treatments outside of the rigid clinical trial context.

Clinicians need to have the freedom to innovate, and new treatments are often discovered thanks to the curiosity of healthcare professionals. Sections 334 and after, as currently written, may restrict that freedom by fencing it within rigid health technology assessment evaluation processes.

To be clear, health technology assessments are crucial in ensuring the safety of patients in the context of a broad and general practices of medical practices. But those guidelines should not limit the ability for a clinician to explore innovative ways to treat patients. Should the instinct and scientific judgment of a clinician be proven right by exceptional trials, this will lead to more extensive research that will ultimately be assessed by health technology agencies that will endorse those new medical practices for broader use. But for that to happen, clinicians need to have the liberty to explore innovative treatments modalities which is the goal of the current exceptional access pathways.

IMC recommends that the Government of Québec maintain its current exceptional access pathways and does not restrict it as currently drafted in Bill 15.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has reinforced the value and importance of a strong and sustainable health system in Canada and the need for a robust and competitive life sciences sector where federal and provincial governments work collaboratively with industry. COVID-19 has also accelerated global competitiveness for attracting investments in biomanufacturing and innovative pharmaceutical research, as countries and provinces are realizing the value our industry brings to communities.

We urge the government to consider innovative medicines as an investment in its citizens, its health system and to strengthen its healthcare sector.

For more information, please contact Jean-Frédéric Lafontaine, Executive Director, Provincial Government Affairs at jflafontaine@imc-mnc.ca.



**For more information,
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