



INNOVATIVE  
MEDICINES  
CANADA

# INCREASING ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE MEDICINES

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations  
in Advance of the 2026 Alberta Budget

JANUARY 2026



RECOMMENDATION 1

**COLLABORATE WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF U.S. MOST-FAVOURLED NATION POLICY**

RECOMMENDATION 2

**PROCEED WITH ALBERTA-LED ACCELERATED ACCESS PROGRAM TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE MEDICINES FOR ALBERTANS**

RECOMMENDATION 3

**STRENGTHEN AND PRIORITIZE ALBERTA'S LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR AS A KEY DRIVER OF HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



## INTRODUCTION

Canada's healthcare system is being shaped by an increasingly complex global political landscape. In this environment, Canadian patients face growing risks to timely access to healthcare innovations<sup>1</sup> that deliver meaningful health outcomes. Innovative medicines play an essential role in keeping Canadians healthy and relieving pressure on healthcare systems. However, Canadians are waiting too long for the medicines they need, and in some cases they cannot access important new treatments at all. Currently, only 18 per cent of new medicines launched globally are available through Canada's public drug plans, compared with the OECD average of 28 per cent<sup>2</sup>. Canadians also wait an average of two years to access these new medicines through public drug plans, following Health Canada approval<sup>3</sup>.

Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC) represents the country's innovative pharmaceutical companies. IMC and its members are committed to improving the health of Canadians through the discovery, development, and delivery of innovative medicines and vaccines. The sector supports over 110,000 high-value jobs, invests \$3.2 billion annually in R&D, and contributes \$18.4 billion to the Canadian economy each year<sup>4</sup>.

Collaboration between industry and government is essential to develop policies and regulations that position Canada as an attractive destination for future R&D and life sciences investment. Canadian scientists and clinicians benefit from access to cutting-edge scientific developments, while patients get earlier access to innovative medicines through clinical trials.

Favourable policies and regulations will help ensure Canada remains competitive with other countries in the global life sciences sector. With recent discussions around most-favoured nation (MFN) pricing in the U.S., governments must act decisively and swiftly to mitigate the potential consequences for Canada's life sciences sector and for Canadian patients. The Government of Alberta, in particular, has an opportunity to position the province as a viable market for innovation.

IMC has prepared this submission in advance of Alberta's 2026 budget to outline a path forward that prioritizes Alberta patients and improves their access to life-saving medicines and vaccines. IMC looks forward to engaging meaningfully with the Alberta Government to develop solutions that benefit everyone living in Alberta and across Canada.



<sup>1</sup> Healthcare innovation in this context refers to: innovative treatments which use the best available science and technology; seamless care pathways, including better screening and diagnostics; and the expanded use of health data and real-world evidence to improve healthcare decision-making at the individual, system, and population levels.

<sup>2</sup> PhRMA (2023), Global Access to New Medicines Report.

<sup>3</sup> Conference Board of Canada (2024), Access and Time to Patient: Prescription Drugs in Canada.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada (2023), The Canadian Research and Development Pharmaceutical Sector, 2020.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

### COLLABORATE WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF U.S. MOST-FAVOURLED NATION POLICY:

In May 2025, the United States issued an Executive Order introducing a most-favoured nation (MFN) pricing policy, which links U.S. pharmaceutical prices to the lowest prices paid in other countries. As a result, international scrutiny of pharmaceutical pricing has intensified, creating uncertainty for new product launches, and innovation and investment in Canada. The policy places significant pressure on Canada to contribute more to the cost of innovation.

For provinces, including Alberta, the MFN policy highlights the importance of clear and predictable funding to promote confidence in Canada as a competitive and reliable market for innovation. This certainty is essential for companies making long-term decisions about where to invest, launch, and grow. Creating shared value for Canadians, government, and industry reduces potential MFN-related risks to patient access, innovation, and competitiveness.

IMC's ask of the Government of Alberta:

#### 1.1 Collaborate with federal counterparts to mitigate potential downstream impacts of MFN-related pricing pressures by:

- Bolstering resourcing for health and innovation by actively advocating for faster and more predictable access to innovative medicines, reinforcing Alberta's competitiveness as a destination for investment, clinical research, and timely product launches.
- Promoting regulatory agility by working with federal partners to address challenges across Health Canada, Canada's Drug Agency (CDA), and the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB), including duplication, misalignment, and delays that exacerbate MFN-related uncertainty for provinces and patients.



## RECOMMENDATION 2

### PROCEED WITH ALBERTA-LED ACCELERATED ACCESS PROGRAM TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE MEDICINES FOR ALBERTANS:

Earlier treatment can lead to significantly improved patient outcomes and help shift Alberta's healthcare system from reactive to proactive care, improving overall efficiency.

Canadian patients wait approximately two years after Health Canada's regulatory approval to gain access to innovative medicines through public drug plans. Without improvements in timely access to new medicines, Alberta risks falling behind in delivering optimal health outcomes, improving population health, and creating an attractive ecosystem for life sciences investment. By reducing the time it takes for patients to access medicines, Alberta can strengthen its competitiveness as a destination for research investment, clinical trials, and biomanufacturing.

IMC welcomes the agreement by Canada's premiers to take meaningful action to accelerate provincial listings of life-saving medicines, as announced by Premier Doug Ford at the December 24 [Council of the Federation press conference](#).

IMC recognizes the importance of collaboration and is committed to working with all levels of government and across all ministries to accelerate Albertans' access to innovative medicines. IMC supports the Premiers' call for all stakeholders, including pharmaceutical manufacturers, to work together to deliver better access to innovative medicines for patients. [Project Orbis](#) is a great example of an initiative involving Health Canada that marks a critical step toward closing access gaps that can arise immediately following a positive recommendation by Canada's Drug Agency, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and manageable health system.

IMC's ask of the Government of Alberta:

- 2.1** Develop and announce an Alberta-led accelerated access framework by the end of 2026.
- 2.2** Commit to listing products negotiated via the pCPA within 30 days of a completed negotiation.



### RECOMMENDATION 3

## STRENGTHEN AND PRIORITIZE ALBERTA'S LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR AS A KEY DRIVER OF HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Continued dialogue between the sector, Minister of Primary and Preventative Services, and Minister of Technology and Innovation is essential to ensuring Alberta's life sciences sector remains strong and continues to grow. Patients and the economy benefit from having companies invest in R&D and clinical trials right here in Alberta. Strengthening the life sciences ecosystem will not only drive health innovation but also create high-value jobs, attract global partnerships, increase clinical trials, and position Alberta as a leader in the knowledge-based economy.

IMC's ask of the Government of Alberta:

- 3.1** Send a delegation of representatives from the Government of Alberta to the 2026 BIO San Diego International Conference to support opportunities for biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector leaders, public sector representatives, and health science researchers to develop partnerships that will lead to greater investment in Alberta's pharmaceutical and life sciences sector.
- 3.2** Develop and implement an Alberta life sciences strategy that recognizes and prioritizes the life sciences sector as a cornerstone of economic diversification and innovation.



## CONCLUSION

IMC and its members look forward to strengthening their existing collaboration and partnership with the Government of Alberta. IMC continues to work productively with all levels of government and stakeholders across Canada to support sustainable healthcare systems and ensure Albertans have timely access to the innovative medicines and vaccines they need.

As the province develops its budget, IMC encourages the government to implement IMC’s recommendations and advance policies that promote better health outcomes, health system improvements, and economic growth. By doing so, Alberta can:

- Improve patient access to innovative medicines.
- Help patients prevent or delay illness, live longer, and enjoy a better quality of life.
- Improve efficiencies in healthcare spending and healthcare human resources.
- Foster a robust domestic life sciences sector and pharmaceutical value chain.
- Strengthen long-term economic competitiveness.
- Create sustainable, high-value jobs.

## ABOUT IMC

Innovative Medicines Canada represents Canada’s innovative pharmaceutical industry. IMC helps its members discover, develop, and deliver innovative medicines and vaccines, and contribute to the life sciences ecosystem across the country. Guided by a strict Code of Ethical Practices, IMC members work with governments, private payers, healthcare professionals, and stakeholders to contribute to the overall health of Canadians.





## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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