

Statement from BIOTECCanada regarding PMPRB implementation delay

The industry welcomes and supports the delay in the implementation of the new regulatory framework for the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB). The delay is prudent at this time and is an acknowledgement of the complex dynamic of seeking solutions to address a global pandemic while also recognizing the longstanding calls from industry to frame workable solutions to secure access to vital new medicines for Canadian patients.

The past 30 years have seen many advances in biotechnology resulting in Canadians living longer, more productive and higher quality lives today. Now, stem cell, gene and cell therapies, immuno-oncology therapeutics, CRISPR editing and new vaccines hold the promise of cures for many more diseases. Canadian regulatory policies must enable and support Canadian patients' timely access to these state-of-the-art treatments. This is particularly true for therapies for rare diseases, where Canadian patients with rare diseases continue to endure long delays in access to medicines available in other countries. If anything, the current global pandemic has demonstrated the importance of a healthy and diverse domestic biotech industry built on innovation, entrepreneurship, great science and research. Indeed, since the onset of the COVID 19 crisis, the Canadian biotech ecosystem has been working very closely with the federal government throughout the health crisis to help identify potential therapeutic and vaccine candidates. Ultimately, it will in all likelihood be a biotech innovation in the form of a vaccine and an anti-viral that allows society and the economy to return to where it once was.

As we look forward there remains the very real probability of other COVID or COVID-like health challenges. Accordingly, it will be imperative Canada has the capacity to not only innovate and solve but deliver those innovations to Canadians. Canada's regulatory policy environment plays a central role in establishing Canada's competitiveness in attracting the talent, investment and innovation needed to solve for future challenges. An approach to policy that focuses uniquely on pricing while ignoring the complexities and connectiveness of the entire ecosystem will significantly undermine Canada's global competitiveness going forward and disadvantage Canadians in the long term. While the industry supports the delay in implementation it also strongly urges the government to use the delay to develop a more constructive and holistic approach to policy impacting the sector. In this context, BIOTECCanada and its members will work with other stakeholders to develop and bring forward constructive recommendations to support the design of an effective and competitive policy framework which will support the growth of innovation and continued access to the vital new medicines Canadian patients need to ensure healthier outcomes for themselves and their families.