



July 31, 2019

Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I am writing with respect to the concerns about Canadian supply of insulin occasioned by recent “insulin caravans” and announcements of bulk import legislation by the U.S. government. Diabetes Canada urges Health Canada to act immediately and decisively to protect the Canadian supply of insulin.

We appreciate that the increasing demand in the U.S. for Canadian insulin supplies is a matter that your office and Health Canada are monitoring closely. We want to make you aware of two pieces of information we received today that increase our concern.

Firstly, we became aware today for the first time that there has been at least one incidence of a temporary, localized interruption in Canadian insulin supply due to an insulin caravan. One man from British Columbia reports that his pharmacy was sold out of his insulin after a caravan visited, and consequently he had to wait till the following day to get his insulin. As you are aware, even temporary interruptions in supply can have potentially dangerous consequences for someone who is dependent on insulin. If Canadians with diabetes lose confidence in the security of the supply of insulin in Canada, they may choose to stockpile insulin, which could greatly exacerbate supply concerns.

Secondly, we note the announcement by the U.S. government that they will make it legal to import medications from Canada, even in large quantities. This creates a risk that Canada – a market one-tenth the size of the U.S. –

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could face disruptions to its domestic supply of insulin, jeopardizing the health of Canadians and straining the Canadian health care system.

We urge Health Canada to take immediate, decisive measures to proactively address this new legislation in a way that protects and ensures the supply and ready availability of insulin on which Canadians depend.

We would like to meet with you to discuss any measures under consideration to ensure that the perspectives of the patients and health care professionals whom we represent are fully considered, and will follow with your office to arrange a time.

Sincerely,

Jan Hux, MD  
President & CEO