New biosimilar switch policy in New Brunswick improves patient access to safe and effective medicines [1]

Global Impact [2]

- *New Brunswick joins British Columbia and Alberta in implementing "switch" policy that changes coverage for specific biologic medicines.*
- *Patients switching from reference biologics to biosimilar versions will continue receiving safe, effective treatment while saving millions of dollars every year.*
- *Sandoz Canada is committed to supporting patients, their healthcare professionals, and the New Brunswick Government with high quality biosimilar medicines and experienced, comprehensive patient support programs.*

Boucherville, Quebec, April 21, 2021 – Sandoz Canada, a leader in generic pharmaceuticals and biosimilars, welcomes the New Brunswick Government introduction of a biosimilars switch policy to expand access to high-quality biologic medicines so that patients can benefit from these treatments.

New Brunswick becomes the third province to enact a switch policy for biosimilars, following British Columbia and Alberta. According to the news release issued by the Government of New Brunswick, this new policy will enable annual savings of several million dollars once implemented.

"Biosimilar switch policies are an important step towards increasing patient access to high-quality, life-enhancing biosimilar medicines they need while realizing significant cost savings. We urge other provinces across the country to follow B.C., Alberta, and now, New Brunswick's lead, to promote wider adoption of biosimilars and reinvest savings into the healthcare system while enabling more patients to benefit from biologic treatment," said Michel Robidoux, President and General Manager, Sandoz Canada.

"We recognize patients will need support and reassurance, and that a proper transition period to a biosimilar requires the necessary investment of time from healthcare professionals. Sandoz is fully committed to supporting patients and their healthcare team through this transition and beyond with education programs, and through our experienced, comprehensive patient support programs," added Karine Matteau, Vice President, Bio-Generic Hospital/Physician channel and Head Biosimilars at Sandoz Canada.

Commenting on a potential additional benefit of biosimilars, Robidoux added: "As our healthcare system continues to confront the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the cost savings benefits of biosimilars is one potential answer to the challenges faced by the Canadian healthcare system as public drug plans, hospitals and cancer centres strive to continue to deliver high quality patient treatment care under major budget constraints."

Details of New Brunswick's biosimilar initiative are available on this website: www.gnb.ca/biosimilars [3].

About Biosimilars

A biosimilar is a biologic medicine that has demonstrated it is highly similar and has no clinically meaningful differences in efficacy and safety compared to an original-brand biologic already authorized for sale[1]. Biosimilars may become commercially available following the expiry of patents and data protection periods of the original-brand biologic medicine.

The Canadian Government's Patented Medicines Pricing Review Board has estimated that private and public drug plans across Canada could save from $332 million CDN to $1.81 billion CDN in the third year following biosimilar entry across a portfolio of products[2].

For further information on biosimilars in Canada, visit ***BiosimilarsGeneration.ca*** [4], which aims to support and educate patients, healthcare professionals and Canadians by providing policy updates from public drug plans, as well as evidence-based information and resources from Canadian, international research and clinical communities, and patient organizations representing Canadians living with chronic diseases who take biologic medicines.

Since 2009, Health Canada has approved 36 biosimilars of original-brand biologics present on the Canadian market[3].

About Switching

In the context of biosimilar use, Health Canada "considers switching between authorized products to refer to a change from routine use of one specific product to routine use of another specific product. Patients and healthcare providers can have confidence that biosimilars are effective and safe for each of their authorized indications. No differences are expected in efficacy and safety following a change in routine use between a biosimilar and its reference biologic drug in an authorized indication." [4]

About Sandoz Canada

Sandoz International GmbH is a world leader in generics and biosimilars and a division of the Swiss multinational Novartis AG. A true leader in its field, Sandoz Canada markets and distributes a wide range of generics and biosimilars.

Sandoz Canada is a pioneer, a leader and trusted supplier of high-quality biosimilars based on the global experience and capabilities of Sandoz GmbH in the development, manufacturing and commercialization of biosimilars since 1996. Sandoz launched the first biosimilar in Europe in 2006 and in the Canadian market in 2009.

www.sandoz.ca [5]

Follow us on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/sandoz-canada/ [6]

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2. Patented Medicines Prices Review Board. Potential Savings from Biosimilars in Canada. Date modified: 2018-02-05 https://www.pmprb-cepmb.gc.ca/CMFiles/NPDUIS/2017_Conference_Posters/post_6_biosim.pdf [10]

3. Notice of Compliance Search, Health Canada https://health-products.canada.ca/noc-ac/index-eng.jsp [11]

4. Health Canada Fact Sheet on Biosimilars: Switching https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/biologics-radiopharmaceuticals-genetic-therapies/applications-submissions/guidance-documents/fact-sheet-biosimilars.html [9]

Links
[1] https://www.sandoz.ca/en/stories/global-impact/new-biosimilar-switch-policy-new-brunswick-improves-patient-access-safe-and
[2] https://www.sandoz.ca/en/stories/global-impact
[3] http://www.gnb.ca/biosimilars
[4] http://www.biosimilarsgeneration.ca/
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