

NEWS RELEASE

NEW, PAN-CANADIAN CANCER DRUG REVIEW PROCESS Cancer patients, clinicians, Canadians to benefit

TORONTO, ON (July 13, 2011)—The pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review (pCODR) begins accepting submissions today. Created to assess the clinical evidence and cost effectiveness of cancer drugs, pCODR will use this information to make recommendations to the provinces and territories to help guide drug funding decisions. This completes the transition from an interim cancer drug review process that had been in place for the last four years.

“pCODR was created to bring greater clarity and consistency to the drug review process in Canada,” said Olaf Koester, pCODR co-chair and director, Drug Management Policy Unit, Provincial Programs and Services with Manitoba Health. “To ensure the review process of new cancer drugs is also comprehensive, the pCODR process will include input from patient groups, drug manufacturers, clinicians and government; we’ve taken a collaborative approach and are working with some of the best minds in the country.”

Submissions to pCODR can be made by any drug manufacturer or group of physicians specializing in specific cancers, known as “tumour groups”. The review process has several steps: once a submission is received, a panel of oncologists examines the drug’s clinical evidence, and a panel of health economists examines the submitted economic evidence. Understanding the patient perspective is critical; patient groups will be invited to provide a perspective on the physical, emotional, and economic impacts of cancer and its treatment on their lives, as well as the benefits and possible side effects of the drug. The panel reports and the patient perspective are then provided to a final expert review committee, which develops recommendations to guide drug funding decisions at the provincial / territorial level. Members for each of the panels and committee are recruited from across the country.

Drug manufacturers can choose to submit a drug to pCODR while Health Canada is determining whether it can be sold in Canada. The option to have a parallel process will mean that the provinces and territories will receive a pCODR recommendation more quickly than if they waited until Health Canada authorized sale of the drug; if Health Canada does not authorize the sale, pCODR will halt the review.

“The information that is considered part of the cancer drug review process in Canada is not generally well understood,” said Dr. Charles Blanke, pCODR co-chair, head of the Division of Medical Oncology at the University of British Columbia, and vice-president, Systemic Therapy at the British Columbia Cancer Agency. “To help address this, all reports considered by the expert reviewers will be posted on the pCODR website, along with both their initial and final recommendations.”

Prior to the creation of pCODR, and the interim drug review that was its precursor, each province conducted its own drug review.

“A single, centralized, distinct cancer drug review process allows for careful consideration of drugs that will be used to treat patients, and simplifies the process for all involved,” said Mona Sabharwal, pCODR executive director. “We use the word ‘cancer’ to refer to over 200 different diseases. Most are complex to treat and the drugs are increasingly expensive. Ultimately, the goal is to provide good, solid advice that will inform the funding decisions that governments need to make.”

For more information, [click here](#) to review a pCODR process chart and explanatory audio file.

The pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review (pCODR)

The pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review (pCODR) was established by the provincial and territorial Ministries of Health to assess the clinical evidence and cost effectiveness of new cancer drugs and to use this information to make recommendations to the provinces and territories to guide their drug funding decisions. Along with the provincial and territorial Ministries of Health, with the exception of Quebec, other partners in the pCODR process are provincial cancer agencies, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology in Health.