

## Capturing the Opportunity of Biosimilars for Ontario

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The Canadian Biosimilars Forum believes that implementing a **well-controlled biosimilars switching policy is the single most significant move** the Government of Ontario could make to save hundreds of Millions of dollars, while providing the same high-quality health care the province's patients have come to expect.

**Biosimilars are safe and effective medicines that treat diseases like cancer, diabetes, arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease.** Biologic medicines are larger and more complex molecules than traditional pharmaceutical drugs and come from living organisms or from their cells. Every biosimilar is a biologic medicine that must demonstrate its similarity to another biologic medicine that is already available in the Canadian marketplace and no longer protected by a patent. Biosimilars are approved by Health Canada after a rigorous and evidence-based review process. As Health Canada says: *"Our rigorous standards for authorization mean that you can have the same confidence in the quality, efficacy and safety of a biosimilar as in any other biologic drug"* and that *"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."*<sup>i</sup>

**Ontario has an opportunity to grow uptake of biosimilars – and their associated savings – by implementing a well-controlled switch policy.** Currently in Ontario, only 16.7% of the patients using *infliximab* or *etanercept* are using the biosimilar, even though there is a biosimilar available for both of these expensive biologic drugs. The Ontario Drug Policy Research Network has identified that traditional formulary-based policies may not have a significant effect on biosimilar uptake, pointing to the need for alternative policies.<sup>ii</sup>

**Biosimilars could deliver over a Billion dollars in savings per year to Canada's health care system.** Ontario spent \$1.1 billion on biologic drugs in 2018, a cost that is predicted to rise to \$1.4 billion by 2021 unless there are significant policy changes.<sup>iii</sup> The Government of Canada's Patented Medicines Pricing Review Board (PMPRB) has estimated that governments in Canada have lost up to \$791 million per year in potential savings due to low biosimilars uptake.<sup>iv</sup> But Ontario has powerful examples to learn from: British Columbia's *Biosimilars Initiative* will be putting approximately \$96.6 Million back into health care over the next three years, and Alberta's policy to expand use of biosimilars is projected to save the province between \$227 Million and \$380 Million once fully implemented – savings that can provide more patients with access to more treatments.

## About the Canadian Biosimilars Forum

The Canadian Biosimilars Forum represents the breadth of the biosimilars industry and is dedicated to increasing awareness, access and adoption of biosimilars across Canada. The Forum currently encompasses the country's most diverse group of biosimilars manufacturers: Merck Canada, Pfizer Canada, Sandoz Canada, and Teva Canada.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/biologics-radiopharmaceuticals-genetic-therapies/applications-submissions/guidance-documents/fact-sheet-biosimilars.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Ontario Drug Policy Research Network. January 2020. <https://odprn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Utilization-of-Innovator-Biologics-and-Biosimilars-in-Ontario.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Ontario Drug Policy Research Network. January 2020. <https://odprn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Utilization-of-Innovator-Biologics-and-Biosimilars-in-Ontario.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Patented Medicines Pricing Review Board. 2019. <http://www.pmprb-cepmb.gc.ca/view.asp?ccid=1456&lang=en>