

T1International Statement on the Patented Medicines Price Review Board

My name is James Elliott, and I am a member of the Ontario #insulin4all Chapter of T1International¹. We are a group of people living with type 1 diabetes. We are dependent on patented medicines, namely insulins, to live. We accept no funding from pharmaceutical companies or other sources we feel would influence our decisions or statements. It is on behalf of our group I wish to read the following into the record.

We strongly support the changes to the Patented Medicines Price Review Board, as outlined in the public guidelines released earlier this year.

There must be a limit to the prices of life-saving medications in Canada. To say something like insulin is the same as a loaf of bread or an iPhone and can therefore be priced at what the market will bear is a fallacy. We depend on insulin for our very survival. Just a day without it will put us in the hospital. Longer than that will put us in our graves.

We are horrified by the stories across our border, of Americans with diabetes rationing and dying because of out of control medication prices.

In the US, I have met people trapped in abusive relationships who don't leave because they can't afford \$300 per vial for a bottle of Humalog insulin. I have met people with permanent damage to their kidneys and sight because they were forced to ration insulin. And I've met the mothers of children who have died after they've aged off their parent's health insurance but were too ashamed to ask for help².

Therefore: no, the US is not an appropriate comparator country to Canada. We as Canadians must not set our price ceilings based on prices set there – prices wholly set to maximize profit and completely disconnected from the \$3-6 dollar manufacturing costs of insulin³. Insulin, a life saving medication that by the way was invented in Canada, 100 years ago.

We therefore strongly support the removal of the United States from the list of comparator countries.

Furthermore, Covid-19 has intensified the need for change for our membership and others who are insulin-dependent in Canada. We have members who have lost jobs and hours due to this pandemic. The patchwork of programs across this country is failing some of them. Although rationing is rarer and generally less intensive than in the USA, it is still happening here in Canada.

¹ T1International – About Us <<https://www.t1international.com/about/>>

² NPR. 2018. Bram Sable-Smith. Insulin's High Cost Leads To Lethal Rationing <<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/09/01/641615877/insulins-high-cost-leads-to-lethal-rationing>>

³ Gotham D, Barber MJ, Hill A. Production costs and potential prices for biosimilars of human insulin and insulin analogues. BMJ Glob Health. 2018 Sep 25;3(5):e000850. doi: 10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000850. PMID: 30271626; PMCID: PMC6157569. <https://gh.bmj.com/content/3/5/e000850>

To the Government in power, we say this: COVID is a reason to accelerate progress towards pharmacare, not delay it. Honour your commitment to a Canada-wide universal and comprehensive pharmacare system.

Thank you for your time.