

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

OCT 21 2016

His Worship Fred Eisenberger  
Mayor of the City of Hamilton  
71 Main Street West  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Thank you for your letter of June 24, 2016, in which you request an expedited approval process for NARCAN (naloxone hydrochloride) Nasal Spray.

As a physician and Minister of Health, I believe that access to appropriate and timely treatment is critical to ensuring the health of Canadians. The Government of Canada recognizes that the abuse of opioids, whether prescription or illicit, can have devastating effects on the well-being of individuals, families, and communities, and is taking action to address this problem.

As you are aware, on March 22, 2016, the Department revised the prescription status of naloxone to allow its non-prescription emergency use for opioid overdose outside hospital settings. This is the first time that Health Canada has initiated an urgent review of the prescription status of a drug in order to help address a growing public health crisis.

At the time of the switch, the only approved formulation for naloxone was the injection. Since then, the Department has received a submission for review of an intranasal formulation of naloxone called NARCAN Nasal Spray. Health Canada understands the importance of enabling access to user-friendly versions of naloxone. Given the public health considerations, the Department has committed to conducting the review of the intranasal naloxone formulation on an expedited basis.

As an emergency public health measure, I signed an Interim Order on July 6, 2016, to allow the provinces and territories, should they wish, to import the U.S. approved naloxone hydrochloride nasal spray (NARCAN Nasal Spray) into Canada for a period of up to one year, by which time it is expected that Health Canada will have completed its

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review of the nasal spray formulation of naloxone. More information about the Interim Order may be found at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1095139>. In addition to the U.S. Patient Information, an English and French supplemental information sheet will be provided with the nasal spray distributed in Canada, to ensure that health care professionals, first responders, patients and their families are able to administer the drug safely and effectively.

This action is part of a new action plan I recently launched to address opioid misuse. This plan includes initiatives such as better informing Canadians about the risks of opioids, supporting better prescribing practices, reducing easy access to unnecessary opioids and supporting better treatment options. More information about the action plan may be found at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1086489>.

The Government of Canada will continue to work with health professionals, addiction experts, stakeholders, provinces and territories to implement the action plan and regularly assess rates and impacts of problematic substance use across Canada.

Again, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane Philpott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" and last name "Philpott" clearly distinguishable.

The Honourable Jane Philpott, P.C., M.P.