

The pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review

October 18, 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

As the inaugural Executive Director of the pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review (pCODR), I am pleased to be writing to you today to provide information about this newly established evidence-based cancer drug review process.

The role of the pCODR process is 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 in guiding their drug funding decisions. Under the pCODR process, detailed assessments will be conducted by a pan-Canadian expert review committee, with opportunities for input by patients, the pharmaceutical industry and clinician-based tumour groups. Through a pan-Canadian approach to these assessments, the pCODR is expected to reduce duplication of effort by each individual province and territory and to provide evidence-based recommendations in a timely manner.

As you may know, the pCODR evolved into a permanent process from the interim Joint Oncology Drug Review (JODR), which demonstrated that a pan-Canadian collaborative platform for assessing new cancer drugs provides significant value to cancer care decision making. The pCODR is a collaborative effort between provincial and territorial Ministries of Health and the provincial cancer agencies, with support from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health.

The pCODR Steering Committee

The implementation of the pCODR is well underway with an anticipated rollout in early 2011. Overseeing this work and providing strategic direction is the Steering Committee, which is co-chaired by Dr. Charles Blanke, Vice-President (A), Systemic Therapy, British Columbia Cancer Agency, and Olaf Koester, Director, Drug Management Policy Unit, Manitoba Health.

Co-chair Dr. Blanke is a medical oncologist specializing in and focusing his research on gastrointestinal stromal tumours (GISTs) and colorectal cancers. He is also Head of the Division of Medical Oncology at the University of British Columbia, Chair of the U.S. National Cancer Institute-designated GIST Task Force, Chair of the Southwest Oncology Cooperative Group GI Committee and Education Chair for the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) 2011 annual meeting.

Co-chair Olaf Koester has extensive leadership experience in strategic and operations management, administrative management, public policy and program development, supply chain and drug use management and management consulting in both the public and private health care sectors. He also served as the co-chair of the interim Joint Oncology Drug Review (JODR) and has been instrumental in advancing the pCODR from a concept to a broadly supported collaboration.

One of the first actions of the Steering Committee was to recruit an Executive Director for the pCODR, and I am honoured to have been selected for this role. I look forward to applying the expertise and experience gained in my past role at the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, where among other responsibilities, I led the interim JODR operations, spear-headed the development of an innovative evaluation framework for Drugs for Rare Diseases and launched Ontario's patient-evidence submission process.

Moving Forward

The partners in the pCODR collaboration are currently working together to shape the submission and review process. Many of you have provided significant and thoughtful input through the interim JODR, all of which is being carefully considered as we build the pCODR. The success of the pCODR requires a cooperative pan-Canadian effort and I look forward to renewing and strengthening our collaboration to launch and implement it.

The pCODR Commitment

Our goal and commitment to Canadians is to ensure that, with the increasing introduction of new and complex cancer drugs, the pCODR will bring consistency and clarity to the cancer drug review process, leveraging best practices and expertise from across Canada to ensure provinces and territories have the best possible information on which to base their funding decisions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments on how we can work together to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



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cc: pCODR Steering Committee