

Date

Hon. Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of a constituent who recently visited me to discuss scleroderma, as well as pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), a rare but very complex and serious lung disease, which is progressive and potentially fatal. More specifically, my constituent believes that all patients living with PAH must have publicly-funded access to Opsumit (macitentan) without further delay.

It is estimated that more than 5,000 Canadians have been diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension (PH), but as many as 10,000 may be affected by the condition. Patients with PAH, the most severe form of PH, live an average of two to three years if left untreated. While the prognosis has improved somewhat in recent years, it remains poor despite currently available treatments.

Scleroderma and PAH often go hand-in-hand. Virtually all persons with scleroderma have some loss of lung function in the forms of pulmonary fibrosis and/or pulmonary hypertension. Unfortunately, those living with scleroderma have an increased risk of developing PAH because of the significant fibrosis of their lungs, which can in turn reduce the blood oxygen levels and cause a reflex of increased blood pressure in the pulmonary arteries.

Despite receiving a positive recommendation from the Common Drug Review (CDR) in January 2015, Ontario patients living with PAH still do not have publicly-funded access to Opsumit, the only treatment proven to reduce long-term morbidity. Without public funding for Opsumit through the Ontario Public Drug Program, PAH physicians are restricted from exercising their individual clinical judgement, which is essential to the proper treatment of PAH, and patients are unable to access optimal treatment for their disease. Treatment decisions for this rare and complex disease should be left in the hands of PAH specialists who are best able to assess their patients' individual needs, which will benefit their long-term health at diagnosis and beyond.

I am asking that you ensure that all patients living with scleroderma and PAH have publicly-funded access to Opsumit immediately.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

MPP

cc. *Your Name & Address*