



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY
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May 20, 2003

Dr. Dana Hanson
President, CMA
1867 Alta Vista Drive
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Dear Dr. Hanson

The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) would like to both inform and engage the CMA regarding some very recent situations that propose to challenge a fundamental principle in the practice of medicine in Canada. Clearly, if moved forward as outlined below, the government will negate physician and patient interaction as it applies to the conscious, and agreed upon, decision regarding management and treatment.

You will see in the attached correspondence, sent by the CAG to government in both Nova Scotia and British Columbia, that there are issues beyond the fundamental principle described above. Largely, therapeutic substitution has the potential to negatively impact on patient safety, particularly those patients who are stabilized on existing medications. We are quite certain that this is only the first therapeutic area targeted, and that other fields and drug classes will be challenged in a similar fashion. It is crucial then that the CMA, on behalf of the Affiliates and members, makes a clear and rapid response to this situation.

We trust that the CMA will not take this issue lightly. Rather, it is contingent on all parties involved to take the appropriate steps to ensure that the practice of medicine in Canada is not negatively affected by government decisions towards the drug proportion of the health care budget.

We will follow-up directly with you over the next 48 hours to further discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Phil Sherman, President, CAG

Encl: CAG letter to BC and NS
Copies of government correspondence

< sent by facsimile to 613.236.8864, original by mail >

cc: Mr. Bill Tholl, Secretary General and CEO, CMA
Dr. Des Leddin, President Elect, CAG
Dr. Carlo Fallone, Chair, Liaison Committee, CAG
Dr. James Gray, President, BC Assoc. of Gastroenterology