



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE GASTROENTÉROLOGIE
CAG/ACG National Office, 2902 South Sheridan Way, Oakville, Ontario L6J 7L6 CANADA
Telephone: 905.829.2504 Fax: 905.829.0242 Toll Free: 1.888.780.0007
E-mail: cagoffice@cag-acg.org Website: <http://www.cag-acg.org>

President/ Président

Philip M. Sherman, MD
Toronto, ON
Ph: 416.813.7734
Fax: 416.813.6531
President@cag-acg.org

President Elect/Président Délégué

Desmond J. Leddin, MB
Halifax, NS
Ph: 902.473.7833
Fax 902.473.4406
PresidentElect@cag-acg.org

Past President/Président Sortant

John L. Wallace, PhD
Calgary, AB
Ph: 403.220.4539
Fax: 403.270.3353
PastPresident@cag-acg.org

V-P Secretary/Secrétaire

Mary H. Perdue, PhD
Hamilton, ON
Ph: 905.525.9140 x 22585
Fax 905.845.9778
Secretary@cag-acg.org

V-P Treasurer/Trésorier

Alan W. Cockeram, MD
Saint John, NB
Ph: 506.634.7742
Fax 506.632.1107
Treasurer@cag-acg.org

V-P Finance/V-P Finances

David G. Morgan, MD
Hamilton, ON
Ph: 905.574.7721
Fax 905.575.2661
Finance@cag-acg.org

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May 23, 2002

The Honourable Edward Picco
Minister of Health and Social Services
Government of Nunavut Communications
Box 1000 Station 204
Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

RE: Reimbursement for New Therapies

Dear Mr. Picco,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG), I wish to bring to your attention the following.

As you are aware, new biological therapies for particular diseases are emerging. In the area of gastroenterology, one such treatment is now available for those patients with Crohn's disease that is unresponsive to traditional therapy. These new treatments come with a hefty price tag. Even though they are needed by only a small proportion of affected patients, it has come to our attention that, in some cases, such treatments are being denied to patients because of reimbursement issues.

Please find attached a recent position paper from the CAG, as well as guidelines produced by the CAG for the treatment of Crohn's disease. We feel that such reimbursement issues must be addressed in an expeditious manner. The future of medicine will include many more such biological therapies, and funding matters will continue to be a barrier unless they are appropriately addressed now.

Sincerely yours,

Phil Sherman, MD, FRCPC
President, CAG

- Encl: *CAG Anti-TNF Therapy Position Statement
*CAG Clinical Practice Guidelines: The use of infliximab in Crohn's disease
*Infliximab for the treatment of Crohn's disease: Review and indications for clinical use in Canada
*Anti-TNF therapy and malignancy – A critical review

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Executive Director

Paul Sinclair, MSc

Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology, Editor

L. R. Sutherland, MD

Letter also sent to:

The Honourable J. Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Health and Social Services, Northwest Territories

The Honourable Sindi Hawkins, Minister of Health Planning, British Columbia

The Honourable Gary Mar, Minister of Health and Wellness, Alberta

The Honourable John Nilson QC, Minister of Health, Saskatchewan

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The Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for Ontario

The Honourable François Legault, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Québec

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The Honourable Jamie Ballem, Minister of Health and Social Services, Prince Edward Island

The Honourable Gerald Smith, Minister of Health and Community Services, Newfoundland

The Honourable Anne McLellan, Federal Minister of Health