

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Health, Health Canada
Address Locator 0900C2
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0K9
hcminister.ministresc@canada.ca

April 29, 2020

Dear Minister Hajdu,

The Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism has grave concerns regarding the discontinuation of propylthiouracil (PTU), an anti-thyroid agent used in the treatment of hyperthyroidism. CSEM has confirmed that Paladin Labs is no longer manufacturing PTU. As far as we are aware, the medication cannot be compounded and, at present, it cannot be imported to Canada. CSEM implores Health Canada to ensure patient access to this important medication on an urgent basis.

The discontinuation of propylthiouracil negatively impacts the health of patients who need this essential drug for the treatment of hyperthyroidism. As per a recent report from Health Canada's Marketed Health Products Directorate, there were about 36,000 prescriptions for PTU in 2018¹. PTU is the only alternative medical treatment for patients with an allergy to methimazole. Additionally, PTU is the preferred treatment for hyperthyroidism during the first trimester of pregnancy to reduce risks of congenital abnormalities compared to methimazole², the only alternative medication. As endocrinologists, we have already received calls from patients unable to access their medication and the alternative treatments are not ideal. This is compounded by the current pandemic situation, during which access to non-medical treatments (radioiodine therapy and surgery) is delayed due to the suspension of most non-urgent treatments.

CSEM is requesting a conversation with Health Canada to ensure patient access to PTU. CSEM is the national specialty society representing Canadian endocrinologists and the national advocate for excellence in endocrinology research, education, and patient care. The discontinuation of propylthiouracil reduces treatment options and increases risk, resulting in a negative impact on patients.

Sincerely,



Heather Lochnan MD, FRCPC
President, CSEM

HL/ia

Cc: [Marc Mes](#), Director General, Marketed Health Products Directorate
Dr. [Supriya Sharma](#), Chief Medical Advisor, Health Canada

¹ Summary Safety Review-Health Canada-Propylthiouracil

² 2017 Guidelines of the American Thyroid Association for the Diagnosis and Management of Thyroid Disease During Pregnancy and the Postpartum