



Network of Rare Blood Disorder
Organizations
Réseau des Associations Vouées
aux Troubles Sanguins Rares

April 27, 2023

Hon. Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Re: Meeting request regarding plasma collection

Minister Jones,

As those who oppose compensating plasma donors turn their attention to Queen's Park, we wish to reaffirm our full support for the public-private partnership between Canadian Blood Services and Grifols as a necessary tactic to increase domestic collection of plasma to meet the needs of Canadian patients.

The NRBDO is Canada's unified patient voice on matters of blood supply and safety. We represent thousands of Canadians whose lives depend on blood and plasma-derived medicinal products. As such, we have had a vested interest in the safety and adequacy of Canada's blood and plasma product supply since forming in 2004.

The patient community has great respect for Justice Krever's recommendations. We also recognize that improved regulation and manufacturing advances since the mid-90s have led to a perfect safety record of plasma-derived medicinal products for the last 25 years. With safety concerns mitigated completely, our focus is now on the security of the supply of plasma required for Canadian patients to have access to life-saving plasma-derived medicinal products when needed.

The NRBDO agrees that donation of fresh blood, collected by CBS and Héma-Québec (H-Q), must remain voluntary, non-compensated, and in the public domain. This is not up for debate, here or anywhere. To suggest otherwise is disingenuous.

However, **plasma products**, as you know, are manufactured by for-profit multi-national corporations with plasma largely sourced from outside of Canada, and sold to the provinces and territories like any other drug. Though CBS and H-Q distribute them as part of their formularies, the manufacture and sale of plasma products is almost entirely a private, for-profit operation, with plasma being the key ingredient.

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Most of the plasma used to meet the demand in Canada is sourced from the United States, where plasma donors are compensated. The Government of Ontario has been funding compensated plasma products through the CBS formulary, and OPSEU members have been infusing those products into Canadian patients, for over two decades. Compensated plasma for Canadian patients is not news. Concerns about partnering with a plasma company to collect plasma in Canada are extremely misguided—particularly as alarms about global supply are increasing.

We believe it is in the best interests of plasma product recipients in Canada for Bill 21 to remain in effect, and to be interpreted in a way that allows Grifols to operate in Ontario for the purpose of fulfilling its contract with Canadian Blood Services. The contract with Grifols is very specific and allows CBS to veto any proposed locations that would compete with their own plasma collection centres. To repeal Bill 21 at this time would mean that any for-profit plasma collection company could set up shop anywhere in the province, competing for donations with both CBS and Grifols, but without the plasma being used in Canada. We feel that the priority for collection in Canada should be to meet Canadian demand.

The NRBDO is committed to ensuring the patient voice is heard and working with governments and CBS to protect the safety and availability of blood and plasma products in Canada. We would like to meet with you to discuss this important issue further at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Jennifer van Gennip
Executive Director, NRBDO