



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

July 21, 2022

Ms. JP Hornick
President, OPSEU/SEFPO
jphornick@opseu.org

Mr. Geoff Cain
Chair, CBS & Diagnostics Sector
geoffopseu@gmail.com

Re: plasma collection in Canada

Dear Ms. Hornick and Mr. Cain,

I am writing in response to your open letter of July 15, 2022, addressed to Dr. Graham Sher. The NRBDO is Canada's unified patient voice on matters of blood supply and safety. We represent those 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 concern is now the security of the supply of plasma required for Canadian patients to have access to life-saving plasma-derived medicinal products when needed.

We find it concerning when leaders such as yourselves confuse and alarm the public by conflating plasma collection and blood collection. The NRBDO agrees that donation of fresh blood, collected by Canadian Blood Services (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.

The NRBDO has been encouraging the leadership of CBS to form public-private partnerships for the collection of plasma for several years. As noted in the Expert Panel on Immune Globulin Supply in Canada's Final Report: *"the cost of collecting large volumes of source plasma utilizing volunteer donors is 2-4 times more expensive than the commercial plasma collection model and thus it remains more*

economical for jurisdictions to purchase IG and plasma-derived medicinal products from the commercial market, all of which are made from plasma from paid donors.”

Over 75% of plasma products distributed to Canadian patients are made with plasma collected by for-profit companies in the United States. It is hypocritical to suggest that partnering with a plasma company to collect plasma in Canada is harmful—particularly when global supply cannot keep up with increasing global demand.

The NRBDO is committed to ensuring the patient voice is heard and working with governments, CBS, and H-Q to protect the safety and availability of blood and plasma products in Canada. We urge your union to stop interfering with any discussions that may be taking place to increase domestic plasma collection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer van Gennip".

Jennifer van Gennip
Executive Director, NRBDO

cc: Dr. Graham Sher, CEO, Canadian Blood Services
Dr. Brian Postl, Chair, Board of Directors, Canadian Blood Services
Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health, Ontario
Patrick Dicerni, Assistant Deputy Minister, Drugs and Devices Division and Executive Officer,
Ontario Public Drug Programs
France G elinas, MPP, Opposition Health Critic