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## Canadian Public Drug Plans Provide Less Access to New Medicines and Vaccines

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Despite the demonstrated benefits of new medicines and vaccines to improve health outcomes and help sustain the health care system, Canadian pharma trade group Rx&D's 2010-11 International Report on Access to Medicines (IRAM) finds that Canada's public drug plans continue to provide less access to new medicines and vaccines compared to 31 other developed nations.

Rx&D's 2010-2011 IRAM compares how public government drug plans in Canada and 31 OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries are publicly reimbursed. The report considers a total of 173 drugs covering 213 indications for medicines introduced between 2004 and December 2010.

Key findings include:

- The Canadian Positive Listing Percentage average is 48%, compared to 83.5% for the other 31 OECD countries (ranging from just above 32% in Estonia to 100% in six other OECD countries);
- 57% of cancer drugs are covered publicly in Canada (50 cancer drugs covering 71 indications were studied) compared to an average of 79.9% for the other 31 OECD countries (ranging from a just below 23.5% in Austria to a high of 100% in 8 OECD countries);
- The Canadian listing average is also below all 31 OECD countries for 15 specific diseases areas not related to cancer such as arthritis, cardiovascular, diabetes, infectious diseases and mental health; and, Canada ranks 31st of 32 countries for first-in-class drugs.

Public drug plans are a critical element of the nation's health care system, and appropriately prescribed innovative medicines and vaccines play a key role in sustaining it. They help patients live longer and lead more productive lives.

They also contribute to the sustainability of the health care system by reducing surgeries, hospitalizations and other health, economic and social costs.

Rx&D's 2010-2011 IRAM proposes six principles that could form the basis for a public dialogue to provide better access to innovative health care options: putting patients first; promoting the appropriate use of medicines; making clinical and therapeutic choice paramount; ensuring that financial hardship is not a barrier to receiving appropriate care; enshrining innovation as a guiding principle of our healthcare system; and recognizing the value of pharmaceuticals in improving patient health outcomes and contributing to a sustainable healthcare system.