

PRESS RELEASE

Moving forward on Bill C-9

Ottawa, April 20, 2004 – *Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D)* expressed once again its overall support for the principles of Bill C-9 while stating concerns related to some of the amendments to the legislation tabled today by the federal government. However, many of these amendments are yet to be discussed by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

While expressing his disappointment that Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) do not wish to have Rx&D member companies' full participation in the provision of medicines under the bill, Rx&D President Russell Williams stated that what is most important is getting affordable medicines to the developing countries as quickly as possible.

"It is important that parameters are put in place to ensure that the legislation remains a humanitarian venture," remarked Mr. Williams. "We would like to see attempts made by the federal government to ensure a system that is open, transparent and does everything possible to curb diversion. In this regard, the federal government has recognized that Bill C-9 must adhere to the WTO Decision of last August, which stated that medicines provided to least developed and developing countries must be for humanitarian, non-commercial use. The government amendments put forward today attempt to ensure that contracts of patented medicines being copied for export are not being exploited for commercial gain."

Rx&D has supported the intent of Bill C-9 since its inception and has emphasized, based on the industry's experience in providing medicines to Africa in partnership with health care organizations, that while getting these much-needed medicines into the hands of patients is paramount, providing these medicines to developing countries is only a first step.

Success of this aid initiative can only be measured through: patients receiving appropriate diagnosis and having access to proper and adequate medical facilities, medicines being properly administered and patient compliance being adequately monitored, as well as the provision of proper follow-up care.

"The passage of this unprecedented humanitarian legislation speaks volumes for Canada and Canadians and reflects the compassion and reality of action that will soon benefit those in need of our help," concluded Mr. Williams.

Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D) is the national association representing more than 23,000 Canadians who work for more than 50 member companies. Member companies share a single primary objective: to discover new medicines that will improve the quality of health care available for every Canadian. Over 90% of the medicines available today have been developed by the research-based pharmaceutical industry.

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