



# GBS/CIDP Foundation of Canada

Guillain-Barré Syndrome/Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy  
*Support, Education, Research, Advocacy*

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December 11, 2018

**The Honourable Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, PC, MP**  
**Minister of Health of Canada**  
70 Colombine Driveway  
Tunney's Pasture  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0K9

Honourable Petitpas-Taylor;

I am the Executive Director of GBS/CIDP Foundation of Canada, a patient organization representing patients and families afflicted with GBS, CIDP, and variants, such as MMN. We are considered rare neuromuscular disease with incidence rates around 2 in 100,000. Our mission is that of support, education, research, and advocacy. We believe no patient or family should go through these disorders alone.

Many of our patients are prescribed immunoglobulin therapies for the treatment of our disorders. If left untreated, the progression of our disorders will often lead to paralysis and a poor quality of life. As Canadians that rely on Canadian Blood Services to secure the supply of Immunoglobulin, we work closely with CBS as a patient stakeholder, but also as concerned Canadians about the safety of our blood supply.

I write this letter in support of Canadian Blood Service's request to change the MSM deferral policy to a 3-month time-based deferral. I was able to represent our foundation in open dialogue about the change in policy with many other community leaders. Over several months, participants were given information of the science and research that is driving the proposed change in policy. We were given the opportunity to voice concerns and to ask questions of trusted scientists. The policy change aligns with our Government's evidence-based approach and with leaders in MSM policy change around the world. This is not only timely, but will improve the fairness of blood donation, a positive step in bridging the gaps between all Canadians, and in turn, increasing blood collection.

Our foundation trusts that Canadian Blood Services continues to place the safety of the blood supply at the utmost importance.

Sincerely,  
Donna Hartlen

Canadian charity registration number: 887327906RR0001

Cc: **Simon Kennedy**, Deputy Minister, Health Canada

**Pierre Sabourin**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Products and Food Branch (HPFB)  
Health Canada

**Cathy Parker**, Acting Director General, Biologics & Genetic Therapies Directorate, (HPFB)  
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**Dr. Graham Sher**, CEO, Canadian Blood Services

**Don Lapierre**, Canadian Blood Services