

PSORIASIS PATIENTS CALLING ON CANADA TO GET SERIOUS

New report released on World Psoriasis Day shows significant barriers to care and treatment for Canadian patients

TORONTO (October 29, 2018) – To mark World Psoriasis Day, the Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients (CAPP) today released new data on the barriers to treatment that Canadian psoriasis patients face and is calling on patients and their loved ones to get serious about advocating for change at their new website, www.PSOserious.ca

The report, *Pso Serious 2018: A Report on Access to Care and Treatment for Psoriasis Patients in Canada*, highlights the changes to the care and treatment environment for psoriasis patients in Canada over the last four years. While there have been advances in the number of treatments available, there is still work to be done to ensure equitable access to these treatments as well as to dermatological care in Canada—particularly in rural and remote parts of the country.

Psoriasis impact beyond skin deep

Psoriasis is a chronic, debilitating disease that impacts more than one million Canadians of all ages and about 125 million people worldwide. There is currently no permanent cure for psoriasis and patients may experience recurrence of symptoms throughout their life.ⁱ Psoriasis is also associated with an increased risk of developing other chronic systemic diseases, including heart attack and stroke, diabetes, cancer and liver disease.ⁱⁱ

“What many people don’t know is that in addition to its physical manifestations, psoriasis can have a significant impact on the psychological health of patients with psoriasis, and their families,” said Kathryn Andrews-Clay, Executive Director of CAPP. “People with psoriasis have an increased risk of depression, anxiety and suicide – which is why access to care and effective treatment is so important to their overall well-being.”

Significant barriers decrease quality of life

The report revealed significant barriers to the three things that psoriasis patients need to thrive - access to phototherapy, dermatologists, and to a choice of treatment:

- Phototherapy is an effective and inexpensive form of treatment for psoriasis, however, many patients face long trips to the nearest phototherapy unit as the number of clinics in Canada is diminishing.
- Although the number of dermatologists in Canada has remained stable, wait times are considerably longer than the five-week benchmark for non-urgent consultations. A 2017 survey showed wait times reported by patients to be on average 1-3 months for 47 per cent of respondents, followed by 20 per cent taking 4-6 months. More than 13 per cent took between 7-16 months for their first appointment.
- Access to a choice of treatment is crucial for psoriasis patients because they tend to develop tolerance to medication, requiring change to another pharmaceutical. Despite the fact that there has been an increase in the number of approved treatments available in Canada, not all patients have access due to cost and lack of private and/or public coverage.



With the results of this report, CAPP will advocate for better access to care and treatment, including phototherapy, for psoriasis patients. All patients interested in sharing their story and advocating on these issues are invited to visit www.PSOserious.ca.

The full report can be viewed on CAPP's website at <http://www.canadianpsoriasis.ca/images/CAPPreportOctober27finalclean.pdf>

About the Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients

The Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients (CAPP) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to be a resource and advocate for psoriatic patients and their families to improve patient care and quality of life. CAPP's vision is to ensure equal access to best care and treatment for all psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patients, while its mission is to be a resource for psoriatic patients and their families to advocate for improved patient care and quality of life.

ⁱ Pso Serious 2018: A Report on Access to Care and Treatment for Psoriasis Patients in Canada.

ⁱⁱ Canadian Association of Psoriasis Patients: Living With Psoriasis (<http://www.canadianpsoriasis.ca/index.php/en/psoriasis/living-with-psoriasis>) Accessed October 25, 2018.