**Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care**

Health System Strategy and Policy Division
Community and Population Health Branch
8th Floor Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto ON M7A 1R3

Telephone: 416 327-8319
Facsimile: 416 327-1721

**Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée**

Division de la stratégie et des politiques du système de santé
Direction de la santé communautaire et de la santé de la population
Édifice Hepburn, 8e étage
80, rue Grosvenor
Toronto ON M7A 1R3

Téléphone : 416 327-8319
Télécopieur : 416 327-1721

Ontario

HLTC2966MC-2013-4305

July 15, 2013

Dear Ms. DeCastro:

Thank you for your email dated May 15, 2013 regarding the request for naloxone, referring to the May 13, 2013 letter to the Honourable Deb Matthews by the Municipal Drug Strategy Co-ordinator's Network of Ontario.

In March 2012, the minister convened an Expert Working Group on Narcotic Addiction (EWGNA) to provide advice to the government on strengthening addiction services and treatment, with a focus on prescription narcotic misuse and addiction. In its final report, it recommended that the ministry "increase and sustain the availability of Naloxone overdose prevention kits and harm reduction information and materials via public health units across the province." In March 2012, the ministry invested $180,000 on a one-time basis to the Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program (OHRDP) to coordinate provincial opiate overdose prevention training as well as to make overdose prevention kits containing naloxone available to public health units throughout the province. In 2012/13, the ministry provided additional funding to OHRDP through the Hepatitis C Secretariat for these same initiatives.

On April 13, 2013, the ministry put the distribution of naloxone on hold as a result of legal difficulties related to its distribution by OHRDP. While the OHRDP is not able to continue in this role, the ministry is working on the development of an alternative delivery model for naloxone, involving the Ontario Government Pharmacy. Distribution of naloxone is targeted to begin in the fall of 2013.

Ontario has an established process for reviewing requests for drug product funding under the Ontario Public Drug Programs (OPDP). Generally, new drug products may be considered for funding in Ontario if the manufacturer makes a submission to the ministry. Once the ministry receives a complete manufacturer submission, the ministry's expert advisory committee, the Committee to Evaluate Drugs (CED), reviews and considers a drug's clinical value, and conducts a thorough assessment of the scientific and clinical evidence contained in the manufacturer's submission, as well as the impact on health services compared to existing treatments. The CED then makes a recommendation to the Executive Officer of the OPDP on whether or not the drug product should be listed in the formulary or funded through the Exceptional Access Program (EAP) on a case-by-case basis. The Executive Officer will then make the final funding decision based on this recommendation, the overall budget and public interest.

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Ms. DeCastro

In the case of naloxone, no manufacturer submission has ever been received by the ministry for consideration of funding under the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program. As a result, naloxone is not eligible for funding under the ODB program.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Bowlby, Manager
Mental Health and Addictions Unit