

March 5, 2012

The Honourable Edward Fast, P.C., M.P.
Minister of International Trade and
Minister Responsible for the Asia-Pacific Gateway
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Subject: Arthritis Consumer Experts' statement on CETA negotiations

Dear Minister,

Arthritis Consumer Experts (ACE) provides evidence-based information in reader-friendly language to people living with arthritis, the general public, governments and the media. The vehicle for sharing that information is the JointHealth™ series of education programs (www.jointhehealth.org). Formed as a private-sector company, ACE operates like any other nonprofit group—on unrestricted grants from public and private sector organizations, as well as individual donations.

Arthritis Consumer Experts' primary objective is empowering people who live with arthritis, and as part of that goal we advocate for their best interests. It is with their needs in mind that I write to you on behalf of ACE, and its members and subscribers, regarding the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) negotiations.

More than 100 types of arthritis affect approximately 4.6 million Canadians. While several forms of arthritis have fairly mild symptoms, many can be painful, disabling, and sometimes deadly. For those faced with severe pain and the potential for early death as a result of their disease, it is imperative they have timely access to a broad range of medications that can better their lives and improve their outcomes.

To meet the needs of people living with arthritis, we encourage you and your Government to consider the following recommendations as CETA negotiations come to a close:

- * Ensure that Canada encourages investment in research, development, and introduction of medications.
- * Ensure that Canadian regulations that affect pharmaceutical patents are equal to international standards.

* Provide an environment that reduces the financial risk to pharmaceutical and medical researchers by protecting intellectual property.

Following our recommendations will encourage pharmaceutical research in Canada, making it more likely that patients who do not respond well to current medications can participate in phase II and phase III clinical trials. Please make the needs of patients your priority.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Koehn,
President and Founder, Arthritis Consumer Experts
Person living with rheumatoid arthritis
www.jointhehealth.org

Cc: The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C. M.P., Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Christian Paradis, P.C., M.P., Minister of Industry
The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P., Minister of Health
Mr. Steve Verheul, Chief Trade Negotiator (Canada-European Union)