

TODAY BRINGS GOOD NEWS TO QUEBECERS WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES

QUEBEC IS THE FIRST PROVINCE TO LIST JANUVIA™ ON DRUG INSURANCE PLAN

MONTREAL, Quebec – September 30, 2008 – The province of Quebec has taken the lead by announcing that, effective October 1st, it will cover, under some reimbursement criteria, prescriptions for Canada's first and only dipeptidyl peptidase-4 (DPP-4) inhibitor, JANUVIA™ (sitagliptin), on the *List of Medications* covered by Quebec's basic prescription drug insurance plan. Merck Frosst will work closely with the Government of Quebec to ensure that JANUVIA™ (sitagliptin) is being prescribed in accordance to the reimbursement criteria for type II diabetes patients in combination with metformin when a sulphonylurea is contra-indicated, is not tolerated or is not efficacious.

"Thanks to the Government of Quebec, today marks a new milestone for the thousands of Quebecers with type 2 diabetes who now have access to a new and different approach for treating type 2 diabetes," said Pierre MacNeil, Director, Policy and Reimbursement, Eastern Region, Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. "With this announcement, the Government of Quebec is demonstrating its support to innovation brought forward by the research-based pharmaceutical industry. It is our hope that other governments will follow Quebec's lead by making sitagliptin available for type II diabetes patients in their provinces."

Control is needed¹

"Diabetes cannot be cured but only controlled through a healthy diet, regular exercise and medication," said Dr. André Fréchette, Family Medicine Group, St-Vallier, Quebec. "Today more than ever type II diabetes patients and their treating physicians need access to effective new treatments, with a better tolerability profile in order for patients to achieve control."

It is estimated that diabetes affects an estimated 550,000 Quebecers. Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 per cent of all diagnosed cases and it has been estimated that about one third of adults with type 2 diabetes are unaware of their condition. One in two Canadians being treated for type 2 diabetes does not achieve the targeted blood glucose level (as measured by HbA1c*) of ≤7 per cent as per the 2008 Canadian Diabetes Association Guidelines.²

The rising numbers of people living with diabetes will have a major impact on society, especially since 30 per cent will suffer debilitating, even deadly, complications. Diabetes is one of the primary causes of blindness, non-trauma amputations, kidney failure, and is an important factor in heart disease and stroke. The social and financial burdens from diabetes are enormous – an estimated \$2 billion a year in direct and indirect costs for Quebec society.

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*HbA1c is a measure of a person's average blood glucose over a two-month to three-month period.

About JANUVIA™

Sitagliptin is a highly selective, once-daily DPP-4 inhibitor that enhances a natural body system, called the incretin system, to help regulate blood sugar. The discovery of this endocrine system that led to the development of sitagliptin by Merck, was made by independent Canadian researchers. Incretins are hormones produced in the gut in response to a meal. When blood sugar is elevated, incretins work in two ways to help the body regulate high blood sugar levels. They trigger the pancreas to increase the release of insulin and signal the liver to reduce its production of glucose. Sitagliptin keeps these hormones active for a longer period of time by preventing their breakdown. Sitagliptin has a tolerability profile comparable to placebo and is weight neutral with a low risk of hypoglycemia.

Last year sitagliptin was awarded the Prix Galien for the Best Pharmaceutical Agent in the United States. This award recognizes outstanding achievement in the pharmaceutical industry in the development of new medicines.

About Merck Frosst

At Merck Frosst, patients come first. Merck Frosst Canada Ltd. is a research-driven pharmaceutical company discovering, developing and marketing a broad range of innovative medicines and vaccines to improve human health. Merck Frosst is one of the top 25 R&D investors in Canada, with an investment of close to \$110 million in 2007. More information about Merck Frosst is available at <http://www.merckfrosst.com>.

Forward-Looking Statement

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based on management's current expectations and involve risks and uncertainties, which may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. The forward-looking statements may include statements regarding product development, product potential or financial performance. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. Merck undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise. Forward-looking statements in this press release should be evaluated together with the many uncertainties that affect Merck's business, particularly those mentioned in the cautionary statements in Item 1A of Merck's Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2007, and in its periodic reports on Form 10-Q and Form 8-K, which the Company incorporates by reference.

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¹ Diabetes Québec, *What is diabetes?* [accessed at http://www.diabete.qc.ca/english/about_diabetes/whatis.html]

² Harris SB, Ékoé J-M, et al. Glycemic Control and Morbidity in the Canadian Primary Care Setting (Results of the Diabetes In Canada Evaluation Study). *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice*. October 2005.