



Consultation: Health Canada Consultation on the Proposed Canadian Access, Watch, Reserve (CAN-AWaRe) Classification of Antimicrobial Drugs for Human Use

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Executive Summary: As part of antimicrobial stewardship efforts, Health Canada has established a classification of antimicrobials. The project was adapted on the WHO's AWaRe framework in which medications are categorized under 'Access', 'Watch' or 'Reserve' based on their spectrum of activity, resistance potential. Overall, CSHP supports Health Canada's efforts to establish a Canadian framework to support antimicrobial stewardship, monitor antimicrobial consumption, and combat antimicrobial resistance. We encourage Health Canada to ensure that the CAN-AWaRe classification remains aligned with stewardship objectives across all healthcare settings, including community, long-term care, and acute care environments.

CSHP provided the following feedback:

- We recommend that Health Canada consider establishing separate antimicrobial consumption targets for community/long-term care settings and acute care settings as part of the Pan-Canadian Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance. Distinct setting-specific targets would better reflect differences in patient populations, prescribing practices, and infection severity while preserving the national objective that at least 70% of overall antibiotic consumption consists of Access-group antibiotics.
- More broadly, we recommend that Health Canada complement CAN- AWaRe implementation with the collection of indication-specific antimicrobial utilization data and the development of disease-specific quality indicators for antibiotic use. Combining quantitative consumption metrics with measures of prescribing appropriateness would provide a more meaningful assessment of antimicrobial stewardship performance and better identify opportunities to optimize antibiotic use across healthcare settings. We also recommend continued evaluation of the classification using Canadian utilization data, resistance patterns, and stewardship principles to ensure that the final classifications appropriately balance access and resistance mitigation objectives.