

WE UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO OUR PRIVATE PAYERS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, COST. BY RECOGNIZING HOW MEDICINES IMPACT WORKING-AGE INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR FAMILIES, WE CAN SUPPORT PRIVATE PAYERS IN MAKING INFORMED, EVIDENCE-BASED DECISIONS THAT ARE TAILORED AND RELEVANT TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS.



FRANCESCO DI MARCO, PhD
Vice-President and General Manager, Amgen Canada Inc.



Headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario's vibrant biomedical cluster, and with a research facility in Burnaby, BC, Amgen's Canadian affiliate has been an important contributor to Canada's biotechnology sector since 1991. Today, tens of thousands of Canadians use Amgen medicines every year, and thousands more are enrolling in Amgen clinical studies that deliver the next generation of innovation.

With a PhD in molecular biology from the University of Lausanne in Switzerland, and more than 20 years in the biopharmaceutical industry - 13 with Amgen in Europe and the U.S. - Francesco Di Marco joined Amgen Canada in 2017 with the objective of serving Canadian patients.

What trends are you seeing in healthcare that are impacting private payer stakeholders, and how is Amgen staying on top of these trends?

With the recent announcement of an advisory panel on national pharmacare, it's clear this is an important issue that could significantly impact private payers. Amgen is supportive of efforts to address the problem of the uninsured or underinsured. We strongly believe that all Canadians should have access to the medicines they need, and therefore we are fully engaged in the national pharmacare discussion. Earlier this year, Amgen CEO Bob Bradway met and discussed national pharmacare with Prime Minister Trudeau.

Other developments that will impact both the public and private healthcare system include drug pricing reforms and an increased focus on assessments of value for money when it comes to the drug evaluation process.

At Amgen, staying on top of healthcare trends is important because our mission is to serve patients. We have a team dedicated to the private insurance market and the needs of its stakeholders. We engage with stakeholders to understand their concerns. Our goal is to ensure that patients receive the treatment best suited to their needs.

How do you think these developments will affect plan sponsors/members?

THE PERFORMERS

× CANADA'S INFLUENTIAL THOUGHT LEADERS ×

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Amgen believes in a healthcare system that ensures all Canadians have coverage for the medications they need. We are concerned that some of the policy changes being proposed will impact the scope and timing of patient access to new medications. For example, while a national pharmacare program could have a positive impact, especially for Canadians without drug coverage, any changes need to be made in a consultative manner to ensure that we avoid unintended adverse consequences for patients. A universal program that is focussed only on price reductions is likely to delay and reduce access to new medicines, leading to an overall negative impact on employee health and productivity. Such a policy approach could also lead to reduced investment in Canada in key areas such as clinical research, which would limit treatment options for patients in areas of high unmet needs.

When considering changes in healthcare and health benefits, we need to keep in mind that private health benefits are an important part of keeping a workforce healthy and productive. A robust benefit plan is also one of the ways companies attract and retain highly skilled staff. People are healthier and more

productive when they and their families have access to the care and medications they need.

What are some things you feel can be done to ensure patients have access to the drugs they need to stay productive in the workplace?

At Amgen, we understand the issues that are relevant to our private payers and their customers, including, but not limited to, cost. By recognizing how medicines impact working-age individuals and their families, we can support private payers in making informed, evidence-based decisions that are tailored and relevant to the specific needs of their customers.

Amgen ensures employees have access to the medications they need through our patient support programs (PSPs), which are key to supporting plan members and sponsors. They are designed to help patients navigate the reimbursement process and comply with the medication regimes their doctors have prescribed, thereby keeping patients healthy and productive. As the healthcare environment evolves, our industry and PSP offering will need to evolve and adapt to the new environment in which we will find ourselves.



AS A RELATIVE NEWCOMER TO CANADA, WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE COUNTRY?

I am impressed by the diverse culture and how that is reflected in Canadian systems and policies. I am proud to work with people who care for their citizens with a strong social safety net and yet encourage entrepreneurialism and individual contribution. This duality creates a unique environment where people can thrive and contribute within a community of inclusion and care. Canadians consider their healthcare a universal right and so it should be. The current healthcare discussions reflect an evolution of that perspective with a recognition of the realities of an expanding global economy. In no other country in the world could these types of discussions be taking place with the same spirit. Amgen is a company founded in science, and Canada boasts a strong scientific community. By leveraging science and care, together we can sustain the Canadian healthcare system, maintaining its unique mix of payers in the best interest of Canadians.

