

## **Introduction of new rFVIII products by Héma-Québec**

**by François Laroche, CHSQ President**

That's right! There will be more changes in the availability of coagulation products in the coming weeks now that Héma-Québec has announced it has awarded new contracts for recombinant factor VIII concentrates. This is the outcome of the call for tenders that took place in the latter half of 2017.

As a result, Zonovate manufactured by Novo Nordisk and Nuwiq by Octapharma, two standard half-life factor VIII concentrates for the treatment and prevention of bleeds in hemophilia A patients, will replace Pfizer's Xyntha and Shire's Advate as of April 1, 2018. The latter two products will disappear from the Quebec market when inventories at Héma-Québec and the hemophilia treatment centres (HTCs) and patient supplies are used up. The contracts foresee a market distribution of approximately 53% for Zonovate and 47% for Nuwiq. These agreements will be in effect for a duration of two years, until March 31, 2020, and include two one-year renewal options, at Héma-Québec's discretion.

This means that neither of the long-acting products that was part of the 2017 call for tenders, Bioverativ's Eloctate and Shire's Adynovate, was selected. Nevertheless, as no new directive has been issued by the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services on their availability, the CHS' and CHSQ's presumption is that they will continue to be accessible to certain patients who meet the restrictive criteria adopted in 2015 (i.e., short half-life, venous access issues and other medical need).

Héma-Québec's 2017 call for tenders did not include recombinant factor IX concentrates. The current contract with Shire's Rixubis for the treatment and prevention of bleeds in hemophilia B patients will remain in effect until March 31, 2022.

Biogen's long-acting product Alprolix is also available for certain hemophilia B patients who meet the same restrictive criteria that apply to hemophilia A.

According to Héma-Québec, the newly signed agreements will result in significant savings for the Quebec health care system of about \$10 million per year over the full terms of the contracts.

Strong competition in the coagulation therapy market, resulting in downward pressure on the prices of recombinant factor concentrates, along with the imminent arrival of new therapies in the Canadian market, has resulted in product switching becoming more frequent. There is every reason to think that this trend will continue.

Stay tuned for news from your HTC about when and how these product switches will happen.

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