

The image features a vibrant background of molecular models. The top half is dominated by a bright orange and yellow gradient, with several molecular structures in shades of orange and red. The bottom half is a deep blue gradient, with molecular structures in shades of blue and cyan. A central horizontal band, colored in a dark teal, contains the text "And Then, There's Canada...". The molecular models are rendered with semi-transparent spheres and connecting rods, creating a sense of depth and complexity. The overall composition is dynamic and visually appealing, suggesting a scientific or technological theme.

**And Then, There's Canada...**



**Canadian Proponents of Forced-Switching Often Cite European Experience to Justify These Policies...**

## British Columbia, May 2019

“British Columbia (B.C.) is following evidence-based results from a number of international jurisdictions that have over 10 years’ experience with these innovative drugs.”

“B.C. is leading the country by promoting the widespread use of biosimilars, which have been proven to work just as safely and effectively as higher priced biologics. To date, Canada is far behind European jurisdictions.”

*-Adrian Dix, Minister of Health,  
May 17, 2019*



## Alberta, December 2019

Health Minister Tyler Shandro cited European biosimilars experience to defend his forced switching policy against arguments of Canadian gastroenterologists not to switch IBD patients...



**Tyler Shandro** @shandro · Dec 12, 2019  
David, a decade of experience in Europe, with 90 studies on switching to biosimilars that tell us switching is safe. That's why BC NDP Minister @adriandix agrees. And Crohn's & Colitis UK. And Dr. D'Haens of European Crohn's and Colitis Org. [crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/news/new-biosi...](http://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/news/new-biosi...)

**“**  
We welcome increased availability of effective treatment options for patients and understand the importance of the wise and careful use of NHS resources. Crohn's and Colitis UK has been working in the field of biosimilars to provide patient information and support since 2014 and is familiar with the evidence to date which reinforces the fact that biosimilars are as safe and effective as the reference products. The introduction of biosimilars for adalimumab brings potential opportunities for both patients and the NHS. However, it is vital that patients are fully informed about all the treatment options available to them and commissioners and health professionals adopt the principles of shared decision making. At a time when services are thinking about new contracts, we would also hope that patients' views are proactively sought and that things that matter to patients, including excipients, device and homecare packages, are given due consideration. **”**

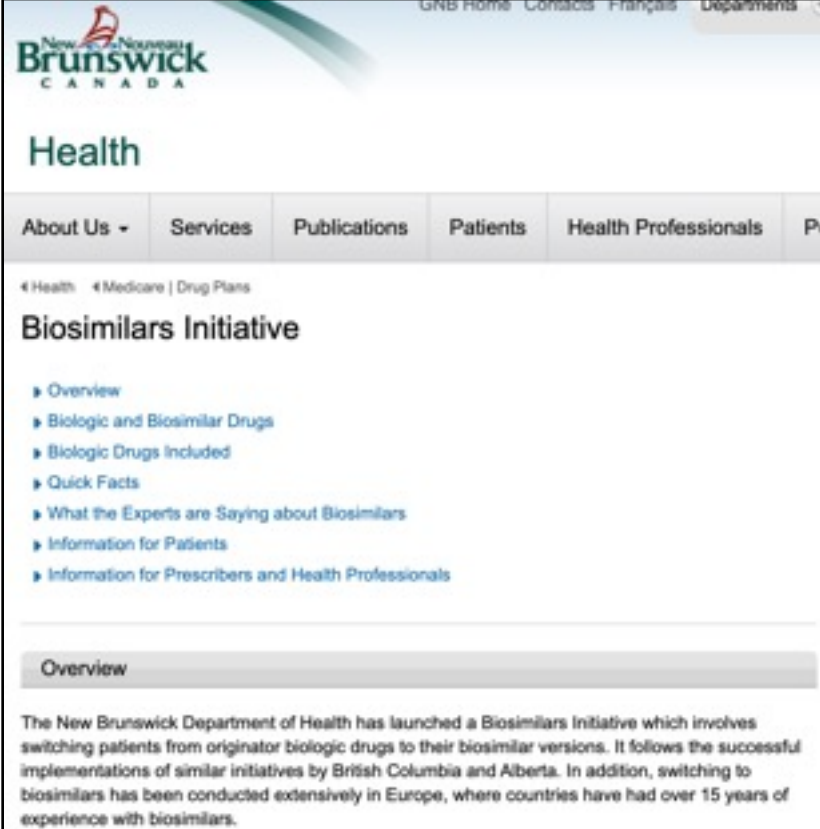
**Sarah Berry**, Health Policy and Public Affairs Officer, Crohn's & Colitis UK

**David Shepherd** @DShepYEG · Dec 12, 2019  
"We provided the Alberta gov't with an evidence-based counter-argument against a non-medical switch for patients with IBD, fully supported by Canadian gastroenterologists and yet they still went ahead."

## *New Brunswick, April 2021*

“This biosimilars initiative follows similar policies implemented by British Columbia and Alberta over the past 2 years, where tens of thousands of patients in each province were safely switched from an originator biologic drug to a biosimilar. Switching to biosimilars has also been conducted extensively in Europe, where countries have had over 15 years of experience with biosimilars.”

“Biosimilars are just as safe and effective as the originator versions, as demonstrated by the experiences in British Columbia, Alberta and Europe.”



The screenshot shows the New Brunswick Health website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "Home", "Contact", "Français", and "Departments". The main header features the "New Brunswick CANADA" logo and the word "Health". Below this is a secondary navigation bar with tabs for "About Us", "Services", "Publications", "Patients", "Health Professionals", and "P". The main content area is titled "Biosimilars Initiative" and includes a list of links: "Overview", "Biologic and Biosimilar Drugs", "Biologic Drugs Included", "Quick Facts", "What the Experts are Saying about Biosimilars", "Information for Patients", and "Information for Prescribers and Health Professionals". A section titled "Overview" contains the following text: "The New Brunswick Department of Health has launched a Biosimilars Initiative which involves switching patients from originator biologic drugs to their biosimilar versions. It follows the successful implementations of similar initiatives by British Columbia and Alberta. In addition, switching to biosimilars has been conducted extensively in Europe, where countries have had over 15 years of experience with biosimilars."



This block shows the continuation of the "Overview" section from the previous screenshot. It contains the same text: "The New Brunswick Department of Health has launched a Biosimilars Initiative which involves switching patients from originator biologic drugs to their biosimilar versions. It follows the successful implementations of similar initiatives by British Columbia and Alberta. In addition, switching to biosimilars has been conducted extensively in Europe, where countries have had over 15 years of experience with biosimilars." Below the text is a section titled "Overview" and a link for "Information for Prescribers and Health Professionals".

The background features a variety of molecular models, including ball-and-stick structures and space-filling models, rendered in shades of blue and orange. A central horizontal band is overlaid with white text.

# What Are the Experiences of Patients in Europe, British Columbia, and Alberta?

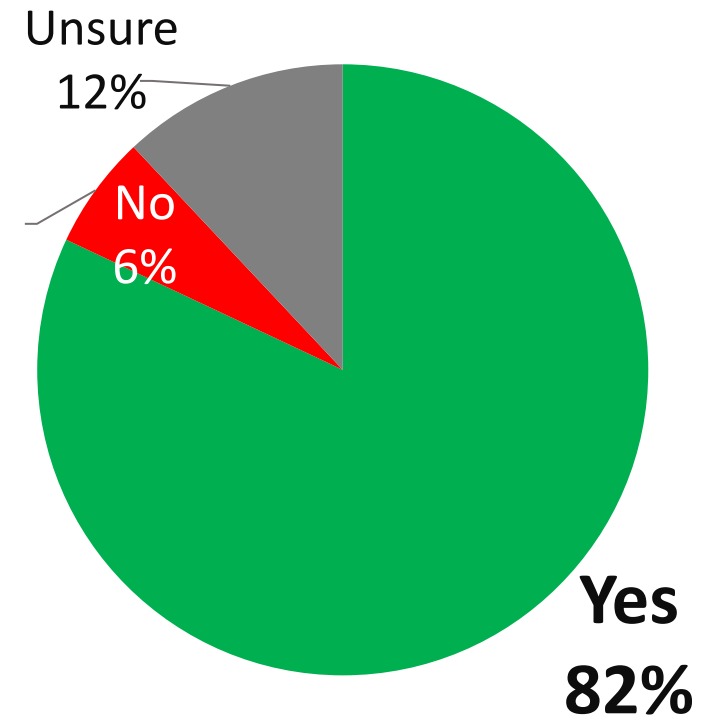
The image features a complex background of molecular models. On the left, there are several blue and cyan molecular structures, including a benzene ring and various branched chains. On the right, there are orange and red molecular structures, including a long chain and a branched molecule. In the center, a dense, glowing orange and yellow structure resembling a DNA double helix or a complex polymer chain is visible. A horizontal band of semi-transparent dark blue and orange colors runs across the middle of the image, containing the text.

**We Don't Know- That's the Problem**

# Real-World Evidence of Safe Use (and Switching) Builds Confidence

- The mere absence of negative data (i.e. problems) is not satisfactory to build confidence with physicians.
- Switching data/studies that show positive patient outcomes will do this.

Should Switching Studies Be Conducted Before Automatic Substitution?  
Canadian Survey, Oct. 2017





The Forced-Substitution policies of some Canadian provinces more closely resemble the substitution policies of Eastern Europe....



**ESTONIA**: Permitted. Patient can refuse and pay price difference out-of-pocket.



**LATVIA**: Non bio-narve patients can refuse and pay cost difference; the physician can prevent substitution. Others must use cheapest product.



**POLAND**: Permitted, pharmacists are to discuss with patient.

# Canadian Op-Eds, 2019-2021

VANCOUVER SUN

Op-Ed

**Michael Reilly: Forcing patients to switch to biosimilars puts them in uncharted waters**

Michael Reilly  
Jun 24, 2019 • June 24, 2019 • 4 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)

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OPINIONS POINTS DE VUE

11 septembre 2021 16h54

**Les politiques de substitution forcée mettent le Québec sur la mauvaise voie**

Partager

MICHAEL REILLY  
Directeur général de l'ASBM (Alliance for Safe Biologic Medicines)

TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

World N.B. & Canada Moncton Saint John Fredericton Miramichi Wo

GUEST OPINION

**Forced-substitution medication policy puts N.B on the track**

NIAGARA FALLS REVIEW

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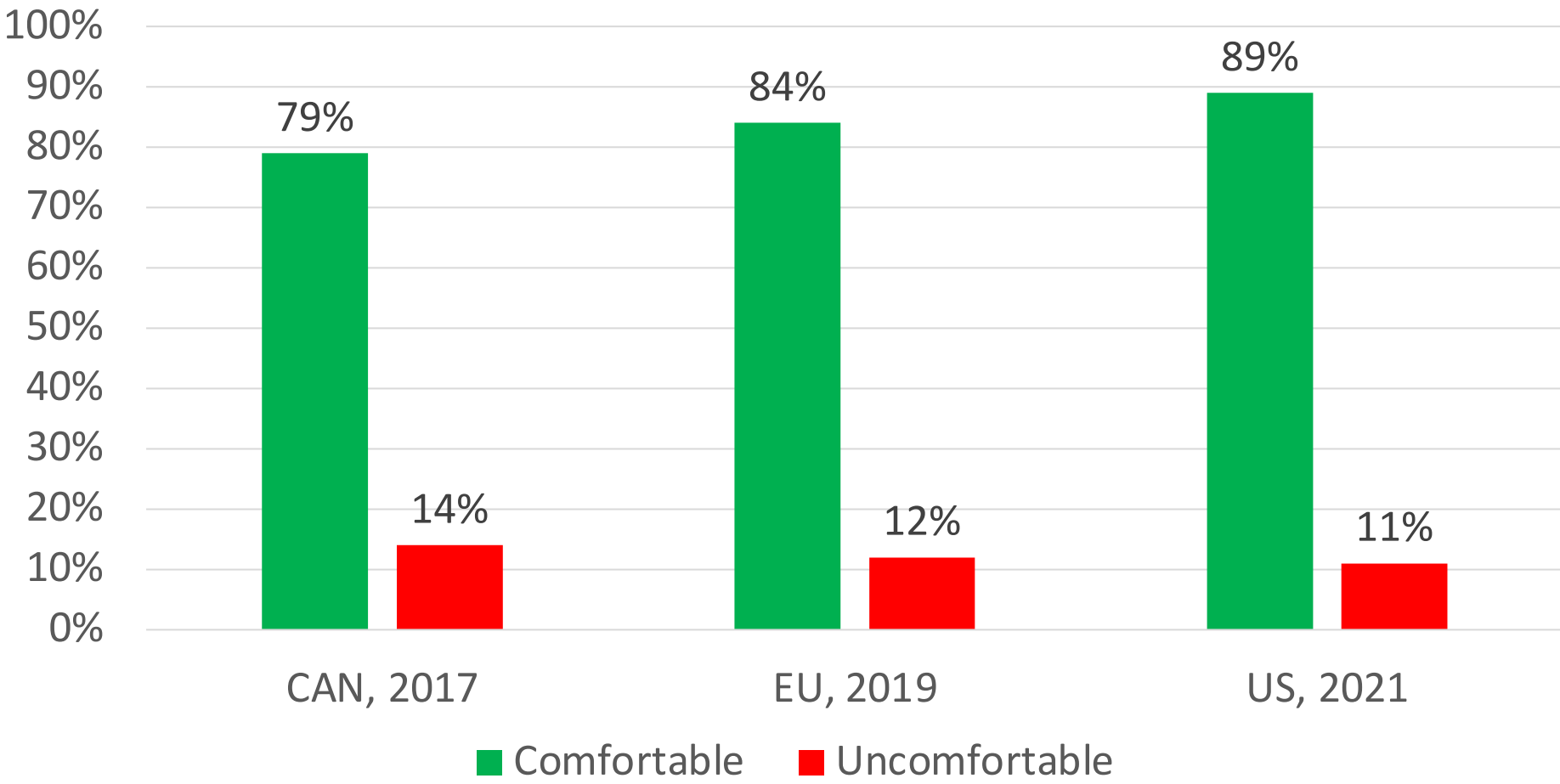
**Forced-substitution policies for biologic medicines would put Ontario on wrong track**

Biosimilars are highly similar to the originator medicines they copy, but unlike generics, they are not exact copies, Michael Reilly writes.

By Michael Reilly  
Wed., Oct. 6, 2021 | 3 min. read

# Surveys Have Shown Physicians Have High Confidence in Biosimilars: They Are Very Comfortable Prescribing Biosimilars to New Patients

Comfort Level Prescribing Biosimilars to a New Patient



Physician confidence in and comfort with biosimilars is high- the vast majorities of physicians have no concerns with prescribing biosimilars- to new patients.

## Issues Arise With the Non-Medical Switching of Biologics

- **Treatment plans are not “one size fits all.”**
- A patient often has to try several different medicines before finding the one which stabilizes their condition.
- Changing treatment may change the control a patient has over their condition.
- If a medicine is working for a patient, most doctors don't think it is a good idea to switch from one biologic to another for cost reasons only.

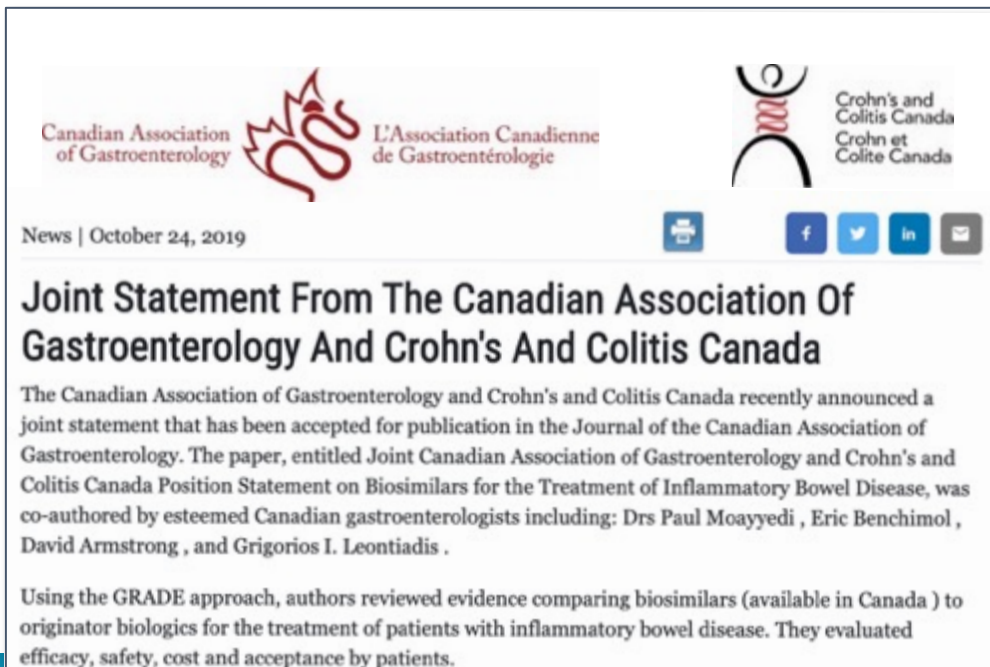


# Canadian Physician Groups Opposed Non-Medical Switching

- **Canadian Gastroenterologists** issued statements **opposing forced-switching policies** enacted in Alberta and British Columbia.

**“Non-medical switching in patients being treated with a reference biologic is generally not accepted by learned societies and the consulted clinicians.”**

– “Safety of switching biologics and their interchangeability”, INESS Report (Quebec), May 2020



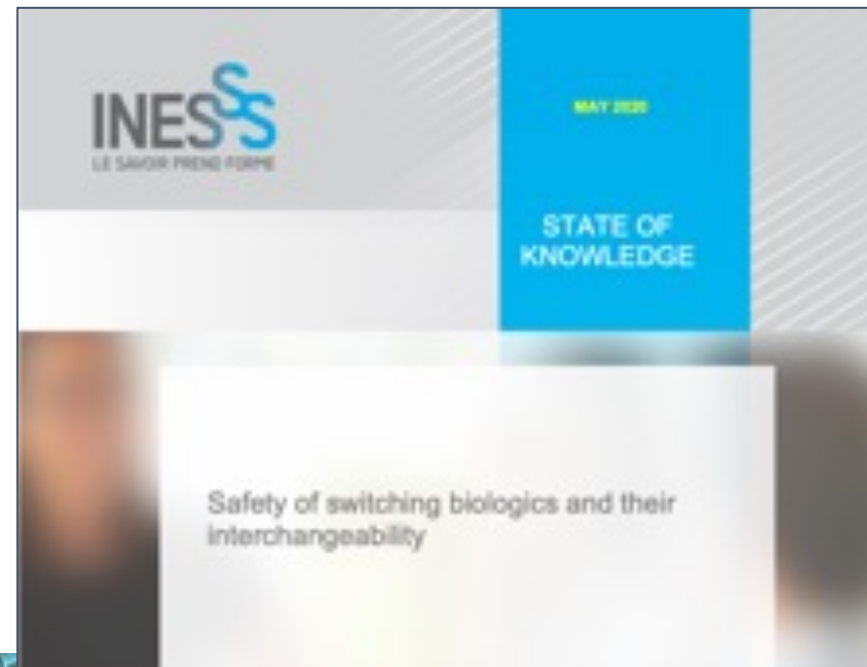
Canadian Association of Gastroenterology L'Association Canadienne de Gastroentérologie Crohn's and Colitis Canada Crohn et Colite Canada

News | October 24, 2019

## Joint Statement From The Canadian Association Of Gastroenterology And Crohn's And Colitis Canada

The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology and Crohn's and Colitis Canada recently announced a joint statement that has been accepted for publication in the Journal of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology. The paper, entitled Joint Canadian Association of Gastroenterology and Crohn's and Colitis Canada Position Statement on Biosimilars for the Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Disease, was co-authored by esteemed Canadian gastroenterologists including: Drs Paul Moayyedi , Eric Benchimol , David Armstrong , and Grigorios I. Leontiadis .

Using the GRADE approach, authors reviewed evidence comparing biosimilars (available in Canada ) to originator biologics for the treatment of patients with inflammatory bowel disease. They evaluated efficacy, safety, cost and acceptance by patients.



INESS LE SAVOIR PREND FORME

MAY 2020

STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

Safety of switching biologics and their interchangeability

# Canadian Patient Groups Also Strongly Opposed These Policies

EDMONTON JOURNAL

NEWS OPINION SPORTS BUSINESS ARTS LIFE OBITS CLASSIFIED REE  
NEWS POLITICS FEATURED: CORONAVIRUS CANNABIS OBESITY C

## Patients, NDP call on province to reconsider upcoming change to not cover biologic drugs

MOIRA WYTON Updated: January 15, 2020



Arthritis patient Wilma Ritter speaks at the Federal Building on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, in front of other Albertans with chronic illness who are devastated by the UCP government's decision to switch from biologic to biosimilar medications. ED KAISER / POSTMEDIA

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## Members of Crohn's, colitis community protest potential non-medical switch policy

VOICES UNHEARD

## IBD patients say they weren't consulted on forced switch to biosimilars

Dec 16, 2019

## 'Back at square one:' B.C. Crohn's patient struggles with forced transition to biosimilar medication

More than 12,000 people in B.C. have switched to biosimilar medications since the province announced it would stop funding three drugs

GLENDALUYMES Updated: February 9, 2020

## Takeaways

- Canadian patients and physicians have strong concerns with forced-substitution policies. Survey data has borne these concerns out.
- Contrary to the assertions of forced-switching proponents, these policies represent a stark contrast with those of Western Europe.
- **The European experience in particular shows that forced-substitution is not necessary to achieve high uptake and savings.**
- Government policies incentivizing the use of one particular product distort the treatment-decision making process and may **create pushback from physicians and patients.**
- **Expanding (rather than restricting) physician/patient choice – reimbursing multiple products competing on a level playing field** has contributed to the success of biosimilars in Europe.

## For More Information, Read our GaBI Whitepapers:

### “Policy Recommendations for a Sustainable Biosimilars Market: Lessons from Europe”

- Michael S Reilly, Esq,  
Professor Philip J Schneider, MS, FASHP, FASPEN, FFIP
- GaBI Journal, Volume 9 / Year 2020 / Issue 2

### “US Biosimilars Market on Pace With Europe”

- Madelaine Feldman, MD FACR; Michael S Reilly, Esq,
- GaBI Journal, Volume 9 / Year 2020 / Issue 4

### “A Critical Review of Substitution Policy for Biosimilars in Canada”

- Michael S Reilly, Esq; Professor Philip J Schneider, MS, FASHP, FASPEN, FFIP
- GaBI Journal, Volume 10 / Year 2021 / Issue 3

Available at  
[www.gabi-journal.net](http://www.gabi-journal.net)

