

## BACKGROUND: OPHTHALMIC BIOSIMILARS IN CANADA

On World Sight Day, Canadians are being called to recognize the risk of mandatory switching that may limit their eye care

As the vision health landscape evolves rapidly around the globe, the WHO World Report on Vision emphasizes the urgent need to galvanize action to respond to considerable challenges facing over 2.2 billion people living with vision impairment globally. In Canada, an estimated 5.59 million Canadians have an eye disease that could cause vision loss.

Biosimilars in ophthalmology create an opportunity to expand vision health options and are a rapidly emerging treatment option in Canada. While various federal and provincial consultations have been conducted to inform biosimilars' policies, significantly less attention has been given to the field of ophthalmology.

Given the changing policy landscape with the forthcoming introduction of biosimilars policy in Ontario, and other provinces, there is a need more than ever to mobilize the ophthalmic and patient advocacy community. The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) in partnership with national and global organizations that advocate for vision health remains concerned about the potential risks involved in mandatory switching to biosimilars.

Clinical dialogue alongside comprehensive patient education are foundational elements of a sustainable vision health plan and policy framework for the appropriate use of biosimilars in ophthalmology. Together, the IFA and partner groups want to drive action for eye care, to improve the situation for those impacted by vision impairment.

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The [International Federation on Ageing](#) (IFA) is an international, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a unique membership base comprising government, NGOs, academics, industry, and individuals in over 80 countries. Nearly 50 years old, the IFA has become known as a leading and innovative organization that works across disciplines and sectors toward common goals that improve the lives of older people. Through the IFA's formal relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and general consultative status at the United Nations and its agencies, the IFA is in the position to advocate directly with member states and contribute to and inform intergovernmental dialogue.