

PULSE

Drug sales up 12.6% annually since 1988

The Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) says sales of pharmaceuticals for human use in Canada topped \$13.1 billion in 2002, up \$1.6 billion (13.9%) from 2001. Patented drugs accounted for \$8.8 billion in sales, up 17% from \$7.5 billion in 2001. Sales of non-patented brand-name drugs remained stable at \$2.9 billion, while sales of generic drugs increased 40%, from \$1.0 billion in 2001 to \$1.4 billion in 2002.

The \$13.1 billion in sales represents a 72.4% increase over sales of \$7.6 billion in 1998. Between 1998 and 2002, the patented drugs component of total drug sales increased by 107%, from \$4.25 billion to \$8.8 billion.

Cardiovascular drugs accounted for 26.6% of all patented drug sales (\$2.33 billion) in 2002, followed by drugs for the nervous system such as antidepressants (\$1.43 billion), alimentary tract and metabolism (\$1.19 billion) and general anti-infective drugs for systemic use (\$970 million).

The PMPRB (www.pmprb-cepmb.gc.ca) maintains the Patented Medicine Price Index, a tool for evaluating changes in the prices of patented drugs sold in Canada. It indicates that prices decreased by 1.2% in 2002, following a trend of either declines or small increases since the index was devised in 1993. Another tool, the Patented Medicine Quantity Index, allows for examination of trends in the use of patented drugs, and this measure shows that the quantity of patented drugs sold in Canada has increased by an average of 12.6% per year since 1988. — *Shelley Martin*, Senior Analyst, CMA Research, Policy and Planning

