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April 10, 2020

An open letter to Canadian grocers:

I am writing on behalf of 4,300 Canadians who live with cystic fibrosis, a fatal, progressive, genetic condition. Due to risk of respiratory infections, the health of people with cystic fibrosis is extremely vulnerable during this time of COVID-19, and they need your help.

Cystic fibrosis causes a build-up of thick sticky mucus that causes severe, irreversible damage to the lungs and digestive system, making it hard to breathe and to digest food. People with CF must take digestive enzymes when they eat to help them get the nutrients they need. They also require a high-fat, high-calorie diet in order to stay as healthy as possible and help fight the infections that can damage their lungs and shorten their lives.

During this time of physical distancing, people with cystic fibrosis need assurances that they can access the food they need to meet their daily, nutritional requirements. An interaction with someone who has or carries COVID-19 is potentially deadly to someone with CF.

We recognize that many grocers have good infection prevention and control policies in place to protect their customers' health and safety: thank you. However, given their specific health vulnerabilities, individuals with cystic fibrosis may require additional assistance and protection when they shop, even during hours set aside for high-risk populations. **We call on all grocers to implement practices to provide additional assistance and protection to customers with cystic fibrosis, as required.**

People with CF may also need to rely on home delivery. They require priority access to food both in store and through deliveries. As many people with CF can't work, they may not be able to afford the delivery fee. We call on all grocers to provide priority and affordable food delivery services to people with cystic fibrosis and their families. **To ensure that people with CF can get food while self-isolating, we call on all grocers to prioritize orders from people with cystic fibrosis and their loved ones, and that delivery fees are kept to a minimum.**

Thank you for anything you can do to help ensure Canadians with CF remain as healthy and well as possible during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Kelly Grover, CEO