# Migraine Canada Position Statement

**Not Just Needles: Supporting Ethical and Comprehensive Migraine Care**

**Our Position**

Migraine Canada supports the Canadian Headache Society's statement, **"Not Just Needles: Providing Ethical and Comprehensive Migraine Care."**

Migraine is a complex neurological disease that requires more than a single treatment or procedure. While expanding access to onabotulinumtoxinA (Botox®), nerve blocks, and other procedural treatments is an important step forward, access to a procedure is not the same as access to comprehensive migraine care.

People living with migraine deserve care that addresses their individual needs, symptoms, treatment goals, and quality of life.

Patients receiving migraine treatment should receive comprehensive care and have access to:

- **Clear Diagnosis & Education:** Understanding your condition and learning about all available treatment options.
- **Personalized Care Plans:** Daily prevention strategies and effective rescue options tailored to you through shared decision-making with your provider.
- **Lifestyle & Behavioral Support:** Practical guidance on how sleep, stress, nutrition, and exercise impact your brain health.
- **Whole-Health Evaluation:** Screening for related conditions (like anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, or neck pain) that affect migraine control.
- **Ongoing Follow-ups:** Regular check-ins to monitor how well your treatments work, manage side effects, and adapt to your changing needs.
- **Backup Options:** A clear next step if a specific procedure or medication stops working or isn't enough on its own.

**Patients should not be left without a treatment plan when a procedure does not work.**

**Procedures Should Be *Part* of Care and *Not the Entirety* of Care**

Migraine Canada recognizes that procedures such as onabotulinumtoxinA (Botox®), and nerve blocks can play an important role in migraine management and that expanding access through appropriately trained healthcare professionals can help address gaps in care.

Collaborative models involving family physicians, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, neurologists, headache specialists, and other healthcare professionals can improve access, particularly where specialist resources are limited.



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However, procedural care should be integrated into a broader treatment plan. Patients should know who is responsible for their overall migraine management and have access to follow-up and alternative treatment options when needed. A procedure should be part of the treatment plan but not the treatment plan itself.

**Our Recommendations**

Migraine Canada calls for:

1. **Comprehensive, person-centred care** that integrates procedural treatments with diagnosis, education, acute and preventive management, and follow-up.
2. **Shared decision-making,** ensures people living with migraine understand and participate in decisions about their treatment.
3. **Continuity of care**, including reassessment and treatment adjustment when a therapy is ineffective or no longer appropriate.
4. **Appropriate training and competency** for healthcare professionals providing procedural migraine treatments.
5. **Collaborative models of care** that expand access while maintaining quality and accountability.
6. **Outcome measures that matter to those living with migraine,** including disability, functioning, quality of life, treatment satisfaction and not simply the delivery of a procedure.

**Migraine Canada's Commitment**

People living with migraine deserve healthcare professionals who understand the complexity of the disease, consider the full range of treatment options, listen to patients, and remain engaged throughout their care.

Expanding access to evidence-based migraine treatments is progress. But for patients, better access means more than access to an injection.

**Better Migraine Care Now means treating the whole person not just providing a procedure.**