



## 9 IN 10 CANADIANS SUPPORT UNIVERSAL PHARMACARE

### IMPORTANCE OF PHARMACARE



- In 2020, 8.5 million Canadians could not fill a prescription or had to ration their medications to extend their supply <sup>1</sup>
- 1 in 5 Canadians (17%) do not have any prescription medication coverage<sup>2</sup>
- Canada is the only high-income country with universal healthcare that does not include outpatient medication coverage<sup>3</sup>
- Only 38% of private plans cover 100% of medication cost, leaving families to pick up the tab<sup>4</sup>

### BENEFITS OF A SINGLE-PAYER APPROACH

- Economies of scale: a single-payer system can use its bargaining power to negotiate better prices and reduce costs of medications
  - Our per capita drug spending is the fourth highest in the world because prices are negotiated by multiple payers<sup>5</sup>
  - Australia reduced their spending on Hepatitis C medications by 80% by negotiating as a single-payer, saving them AUS \$6 billion over 5 years<sup>6</sup>
  - The Australian single-payer system is one of the main reasons why their prices for brand-name drugs are 29% lower than in Canada<sup>7</sup>
- Administrative efficiency: health care providers can spend more time providing care and less time figuring out which insurance companies will cover what
  - A single-payer system streamlines the process and avoids unnecessary delays in care
- Fair for all: many Canadians already face barriers to accessing health care, including newcomers, those with limited literacy skills, and unhoused people
  - Having guaranteed access to their medications with no strings attached will improve access and health outcomes



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### PITFALLS OF A FILL-THE-GAPS APPROACH

- Adds to the already complex patchwork of drug coverage in Canada, increasing administrative costs and reducing efficiency
- Easier to erode over time through neglect
  - Ex. If the program is based on income and isn't tied to inflation, the number of eligible Canadians would decrease over time despite increasing cost of living
  - Ex. If workers are laid off, they lose their drug coverage

### OUR PRESCRIPTION FOR PHARMACARE



Pharmacare must be universal, comprehensive, accessible, portable, and public

Canadian Doctors for Medicare urges federal Parliamentarians to:

- 1) Commit to supporting the passage of a Pharmacare Act by the end of 2023
- 2) Commit to creating a preliminary national formulary for all essential medications before the end of 2025
- 3) Guarantee that national pharmacare will include universal, first-dollar coverage without copays

<sup>1</sup><https://angusreid.org/pharmacare-2020/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221102/dq221102a-eng.htm>

<sup>3</sup><https://data.oecd.org/healthres/pharmaceutical-spending.htm>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/public-engagement/external-advisory-bodies/implementation-national-pharmacare/final-report.html#6.1>

<sup>5</sup><https://data.oecd.org/healthres/pharmaceutical-spending.htm>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1813728>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.canada.ca/en/patented-medicine-prices-review/services/annual-reports/annual-report-2021.html#a6>