

# PHARMACARE



Canada Needs a  
National Prescription  
Drug Plan **Now!**



**THE NATIONAL UNION is committed to achieving a national prescription drug plan, part of the original vision of health care as charted by Tommy Douglas. Pharmacare Now!**

# PHARMACARE NOW!

## **Fighting for a Fair System**

Our current system covers the cost of all prescribed medications for patients in hospitals. The moment a patient is discharged, however, they must find their own coverage or pay out-of-pocket for their needed medicine.

This leaves millions with no coverage, and vulnerable, ultimately costing our health care system more as their conditions go untreated and become more acute. 1 in 10 Canadians reports not filling a prescription in the last year due to cost. 1 out of 3 working Canadians does not have access to employer-based medical benefits. For Canadians making less than \$10,000 per year, only 1 out of 6 has coverage. Canadians pride themselves on having a fair health care system, but when it comes to prescription drugs, the system is far from fair.

All Canadians deserve equal access to prescribed medication. The National Union continues to fight for universal pharmacare in Canada.

**It's time to stand up for pharmacare as an essential part of Canada's public health care system!**

## **Canadians Know**

Access to appropriate drugs saves lives, enhances quality of life, and allows many to live fuller lives, which they could not do without these treatments.

According to numerous studies, Canadians could save billions of dollars every year by implementing national pharmacare; the amount that could be saved depends on which model is chosen, with annual estimated savings ranging from \$4 billion to \$12 billion.

Why, then, do we allow 3.5 million Canadians to remain unable to fill their prescriptions due to cost?

Why do we accept that Canada remains the only country with universal health care that does not also cover prescription drugs?

Why do we allow this broken system to inflate the cost of prescription drugs, padding corporate profits, with Canadians paying the world's highest cost for generic drugs while being in the top 3 countries for overall highest drug prices?

# Enough already

## **Enough Studies Concluding That Canada Needs Pharmacare!**

IN THE 2018 Federal Budget, the government announced the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, chaired by Dr. Eric Hoskins. Since Canadian Medicare was first implemented over 50 years ago, there has been numerous studies recommending Canadians implement national pharmacare. From the Hall Commission and the National Forum on Health, to the Romanow Commission, all have called for the system to move to include pharmacare. This latest advisory council comes at a time when there is unprecedented pressure to lower prescription drug costs and ensure Canadians have access to needed medications.

It remains to be seen if this government goes far enough to achieve true pharmacare or stops short, allowing the system to remain profit driven, sacrificing Canadians health and well-being. What is clear is that there are strong fiscal arguments to bolster the medical and moral arguments supporting pharmacare. Numerous studies estimate the savings pharmacare would deliver to Canadians. These estimates vary based on the type of system chosen, but what is consistent is that the amount that would be saved is always staggering. Every year, Canada could save between \$4 billion and \$16 billion. There would be costs to get a system in place, but the overall savings far outweigh the cost, and the benefits are more than monetary. Done properly, benefits could also include better control on prescribing, better care because of the use of appropriate medication, better outcomes because of increased access to necessary medication.

A system that included prescription drugs would help to achieve the 4 core goals as outlined by the report *Pharmacare 2020: Access, Fairness, Safety and Value for Money*.

[http://pharmacare2020.ca/assets/pdf/The\\_Future\\_of\\_Drug\\_Coverage\\_in\\_Canada.pdf](http://pharmacare2020.ca/assets/pdf/The_Future_of_Drug_Coverage_in_Canada.pdf)

The only groups that stand against pharmacare are those that are making profits from the current expensive system: the manufacturers, sellers, and middlemen. They gain massive profits from our inefficient, over-priced and morally suspect current system. They are supported by political parties and those who are ideologically against all public programs which take away profits from corporations. These profit-driven interests must not be allowed to undermine the implementation of pharmacare in Canada!

# Three good reasons

## Why Canada needs a universal, public pharmacare program!

### #1 **Pharmacare saves lives**

Access to essential medicines is a human right, as outlined by the World Health Organization. Every year Canadians die needlessly because of lack of access to prescription drugs. 5,000 Ontarians died between 2002 and 2008 because of lack of access to drug coverage for their diabetes. That's the toll from only one disease and for one province!

### #2 **Pharmacare saves billions of dollars a year**

Canadians spend 50% more on pharmaceuticals than the UK, New Zealand and Sweden do. This amounts to spending as much as \$12 billion more than these countries, each year, and still not covering all Canadians' prescription drug needs.

### #3 **Pharmacare improves Canadian health care and helps Canadian companies**

Canadian health care is inefficient without pharmacare, but so is Canadian business. Our health care system is paying too much for prescription drugs, money that could be going to improve treatment in other areas. Similarly, through employer-based benefits, companies are also paying too much for employee benefits. These funds could be diverted to improving other employee benefits, pay, and pension.

Without action, rising prescription drug costs will draw more of our public health care dollars as well as more of our employer-based programs. The impacts of this flawed system are being felt throughout our society and the solution is simple: Pharmacare Now! Canada must join the rest of the world's countries that provide pharmacare alongside national health care programs.

*The time for action is* **Now!**

# PHARMACARE

# Now!

- Go to NUPGE's website to see how you can join the fight.

[www.nupge.ca](http://www.nupge.ca)

- Go to the Canadian Labour Congress pharmacare website to add your name to those who support this initiative.

[www.aplanforeveryone.ca](http://www.aplanforeveryone.ca)

- In your own words, write to Prime Minister Trudeau and tell him why you believe this is a critical initiative that the Canadian government must move forward on. We need a public, comprehensive national pharmacare program.

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## NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC)
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers (CUBGW)
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees (NBU)
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU)
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (PEI UPSE)
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)

The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of Public Services International.

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