

# National Pharmacare

## Neighbourhood Pharmacies' Position:

- Our top priority is, and will always be, improving access to prescription medications for all Canadians. We want to be a part of the solution that ensures no Canadian will go without the prescription medication they need.
- Canada's priority should be on helping those who don't have coverage and those with insufficient coverage, without disrupting the majority of Canadians who have drug coverage.
- To best support Canadians and to ensure access to the medications they need, we need to maintain and build on the current drug coverage millions of Canadians currently receive through public and private drug plans.
- To ensure an equitable approach, the federal government should establish guiding principles of pharmacare with the provinces and territories to ensure basic coverage for all Canadians while maintaining the integrity of existing provincial and private plans.



# National Pharmacare

Canada's pharmacies serve millions of patients from across the country every year, and we have a deep understanding of the gaps that currently exist in Canada's pharmacare policies. We continue to urge the federal government to continue working with provincial governments across the country, to identify ways to provide drug coverage to Canadians who need it most, while ensuring continuity of coverage for those who have it.

Pharmacists are the most frequent touchpoint most Canadians have with the health system and are a key community health resource. Pharmacists regularly provide their patients with trusted healthcare services, ensure a safe and secure supply of medications to keep Canadians healthy and help reduce healthcare costs in other, more expensive parts of the system, by managing chronic diseases and therapies, and keeping people out of hospital.

Drug coverage in Canada is a complex landscape that varies province to province. The number of Canadians enrolled in public or private plans varies greatly by province. While some provinces have mostly closed coverage gaps other provinces have remaining gaps to fill. Some 32.5 to 35 million Canadians already have prescription drug coverage, either through public or private plans or a combination of both, while close to 5.2 million do not. It is this uninsured segment of the population that a National Pharmacare program must address.

Public polling results of Canadians' attitudes towards National Pharmacare consistently show that;

- Most Canadians want a pharmacare program that provides coverage to those who don't have it (80%).
- Canadians are satisfied with their drug coverage (80%) and do not want to see their benefits replaced (75%).
- Few Canadians (<3%) feel that pharmacare should be a main government priority.
- Canadians feel that healthcare issues such as senior care, long-term care, reducing wait times and mental health are more deserving of immediate government action.



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We believe that any new national pharmacare plan must prioritize caring for the uninsured and underinsured and providing coverage to those who need it most; particularly those living with and needing medications to treat rare diseases.

There is a unique opportunity in Canada for the federal government to work with the provincial and territorial governments to ensure that every Canadian has access to the medication they need, by:

1. Establishing Guiding Principles of Pharmacare with the provinces and territories to ensure that every Canadian has access to the medication they need, regardless of where they live, if they are employed, or how much money they make. These principles should state that:
  - Every Canadian should have access to a prescription drug program, whether public or private.
  - Every Canadian should have a choice in maintaining their existing drug coverage or opting into a provincial or territorial program.
  - Every drug program should include coverage for catastrophic care that ensures the coverage of drug expenses that exceed a threshold compared to household income (for example, 3 per cent of household income).
  - Every drug program should include special coverage for rare diseases to be developed in alignment with the Federal Government's Rare Disease Strategy.
2. Providing federal sustainable funding to the provinces and territories to help bring all residents under a drug plan or to assist in updating and improving coverage where required, including by increasing the Canada Health Transfer.

To learn more, visit [www.completetheplan.ca](http://www.completetheplan.ca)



Neighbourhood  
Pharmacy  
Association of Canada

Association canadienne  
des pharmacies  
de quartier

**Position Statement  
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## References:

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