



Business Insights

Pharmacy Performance Benchmarks

All Pharmacy Business Models



Neighbourhood
Pharmacy
Association of Canada

Association canadienne
des pharmacies
de quartier

Business Insights
Pharmacy Performance Benchmarks July 2026

Understanding How Your Pharmacy Compares

What are these benchmarks?

- Neighbourhood Pharmacies' *Pharmacy Performance Benchmarks* provide a standardized picture of how community pharmacies perform across Canada.
- Developed using IQVIA market data, Statistics Canada demographic information, and historical pharmacy counts from NAPRA, these benchmarks establish national and provincial reference points for key pharmacy business measures such as including prescription volume, market size, drug spending, pharmacy density and growth trends.
- Together, these benchmarks demonstrate what "typical" performance looks like and identify opportunities for operators to improve business performance.

Performance Benchmarks Suite

All Pharmacy Performance Benchmarks (Accessible to All)

- High-level national, provincial pharmacy statistics and performance trends, including all both traditional models(chain, banner/independent, food/mass merchandizers) and Non-Traditional models) for all dispensed drugs
- Key industry insights that help explain how the Canadian pharmacy market is evolving

Traditional Pharmacy Benchmarks (Members and Partners)

- More detailed findings customized by traditional pharmacy business models
- Commentary and interpretation to help explain what the numbers mean and why they matter

Traditional Pharmacy Performance Calculator (Members and Partners)

- Compare your own pharmacy against provincial and national benchmarks for class of trade, brand/generic mix and drug category
- Estimate local market opportunities, strengths and improvement areas

Class of Trade/Business Model Definitions

Unless otherwise noted, pharmacy outlets in this analysis are categorized as:

🌈 **Traditional Pharmacies:** retail pharmacy with a store-front; any patient can walk in to fill prescription. Subdivided into:

- Chain: parent company owns all business locations
- Food/Mass: grocery and mass merchandizers with pharmacies
- Banner/Independents: individually owned, whether by franchise or unaffiliated with any other chain or banner

🌈 **Non-Traditional Pharmacies:** >80% of business services non-traditional patients. May not have a store-front. Includes

- Specialty pharmacies
- Mail order pharmacies
- Long term care pharmacies
- Outpatient clinic pharmacies

Definitions and Explanations

Unless otherwise noted, the following apply to all benchmarks:

- All prescription and pharmacy outlet data from IQVIA Canada, stratified by Neighbourhood Pharmacy business model definitions
- Prescription data are for all dispensed medications, no matter what kind
- “Drug Costs” refers to price of medication, does not include markups or any pharmacy fees
- Prescription volume, costs and outlet counts are provided on an annual timeframe

Pharmacy Performance Benchmarks: All Business Models

Accessible to All

Pharmacy Count By Business Model²

	Traditional Pharmacies	Non-Traditional Pharmacies	All Pharmacies
BC	1,555	75	1,630
AB	1,785	59	1,844
SK	443	10	453
MB	479	18	497
ON	5,094	215	5,309
QC	1,908	98	2,006
NB	226	10	236
NS	306	17	323
PE	48	6	54
NL	198	8	206
Canada	12,042	516	12,558

Prescription Volume and Drug Cost²

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	Canada
Traditional Pharmacies Rx (millions)	65.6	61.1	21.6	19.7	265.7	320.8	15.3	15.8	2.6	10.7	798.8
Non-Traditional Pharmacies Rx (millions)	13.1	7.6	0.5	2.7	42.9	8.8	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.5	78.2
All Pharmacies Rx (millions)	78.7	68.6	22.1	22.3	308.6	329.6	16.1	17.0	2.6	11.2	877.0
Traditional Pharmacies \$ (billions)	\$2.8	\$2.9	\$0.7	\$0.8	\$10.8	\$7.4	\$0.6	\$0.8	\$0.1	\$0.4	\$27.2
Non-Traditional Pharmacies \$ (billions)	\$1.9	\$1.6	\$0.3	\$0.4	\$6.1	\$1.9	\$0.4	\$0.5	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$13.4
All Pharmacies \$ (billions)	\$4.7	\$4.5	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$16.9	\$9.3	\$1.0	\$1.2	\$0.2	\$0.6	\$40.6

Population Baseline^{1,2}

	Population (millions)	No. of Pharmacies	Residents per pharmacy	Seniors per pharmacy	Rx per Resident	Drug Cost per Resident
BC	5.70	1,630	3,495	716	13.8	\$723.26
AB	5.03	1,844	2,727	423	13.6	\$817.69
SK	1.27	453	2,797	498	17.5	\$884.66
MB	1.51	497	3,038	524	14.8	\$845.41
ON	16.26	5,309	3,062	578	19.0	\$868.76
QC	9.06	2,006	4,516	979	36.4	\$1,215.59
NB	0.87	236	3,685	859	18.5	\$1,223.26
NS	1.09	323	3,385	764	15.6	\$1,132.63
PE	0.18	54	3,383	706	14.5	\$955.14
NL	0.55	206	2,669	672	20.4	\$1,354.98
Canada	41.65	12,558	3,317	646	21.1	\$936.04
ROC*	32.59	10,552	3,089	582	16.8	\$858.35

*All provinces except Quebec



Growth Patterns: 2024 vs. 2025^{1,2}

	Population Growth	Seniors Growth	Rx Growth	Drug Cost Growth	No. of Pharmacies Growth
BC	0.5%	3.4%	2.1%	10.8%	1.6%
AB	2.5%	5.1%	5.4%	9.9%	3.2%
SK	1.5%	3.3%	2.4%	9.8%	0.0%
MB	1.2%	3.4%	5.2%	8.2%	1.2%
ON	0.7%	3.6%	3.2%	8.4%	2.2%
QC	0.7%	3.0%	1.2%	6.3%	0.7%
NB	1.3%	2.8%	2.5%	7.9%	-0.4%
NS	1.0%	2.9%	4.3%	10.0%	-0.3%
PE	1.6%	3.4%	2.9%	10.7%	-1.8%
NL	0.6%	2.7%	2.4%	9.8%	-1.4%
Canada	0.9%	3.5%	2.6%	8.5%	1.7%
ROC*	1.0%	3.6%	3.4%	15.4%	1.9%

*All provinces except Quebec

Prescription Volume and Drug Cost^{1,2}

	No. of Pharmacies	Annual Rx per Pharmacy	Annual Drug Cost per Pharmacy	Average Drug Cost per Rx
BC	1,630	48,303	\$2,864,303	\$59.30
AB	1,844	37,227	\$2,451,970	\$65.87
SK	453	48,807	\$2,354,286	\$48.24
MB	497	44,919	\$2,305,532	\$51.33
ON	5,309	58,133	\$3,179,263	\$54.69
QC	2,006	164,325	\$4,611,875	\$28.07
NB	236	68,132	\$4,428,832	\$65.00
NS	323	52,681	\$3,773,654	\$71.63
PE	54	48,961	\$2,989,457	\$61.06
NL	206	54,374	\$3,113,540	\$57.26
Canada	12,558	69,837	\$3,232,969	\$46.29
ROC*	10,552	51,875	\$2,970,831	\$57.27

*All provinces except Quebec



Insights:

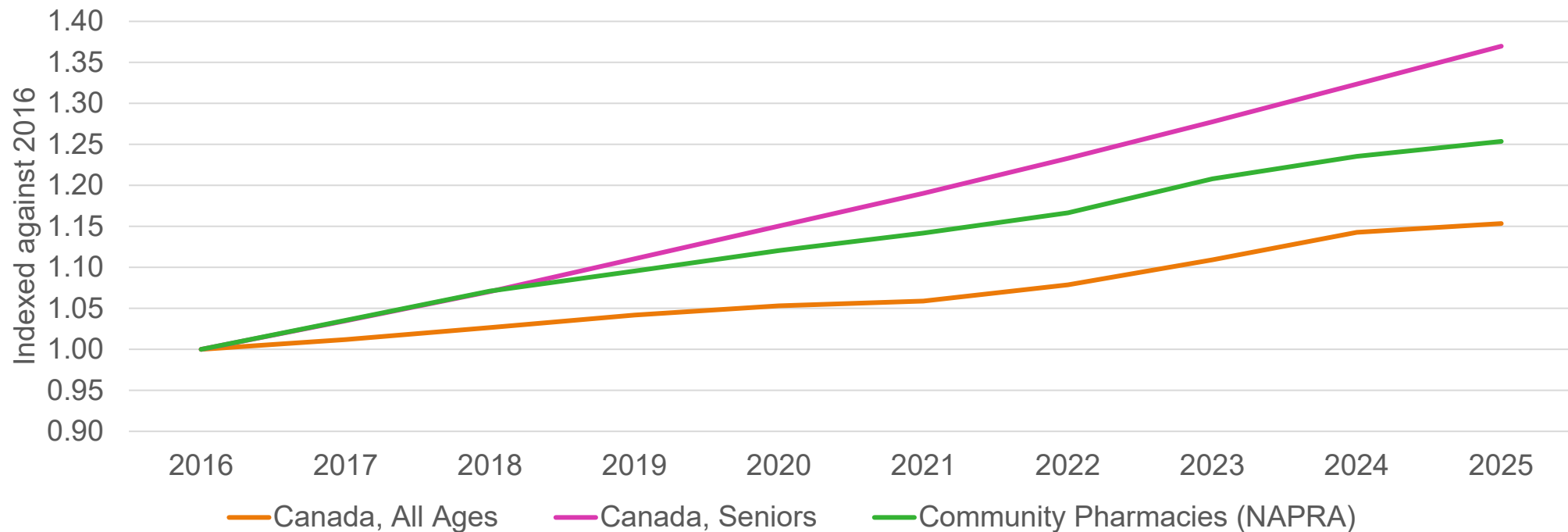
What Can We Learn From the Numbers

- ❖ Pharmacy outlet counts are not strictly dependent on the population (e.g. AB has fewer people but more pharmacies than BC)
- ❖ QC pharmacies dispense more prescriptions and serve more patients: 4,516 persons/pharmacy, compared to 3,089 for the rest of Canada
- ❖ QC pharmacies dispense roughly 3X as many prescriptions per pharmacy, 164,325 annually vs. 51,875 for the rest of Canada. Plus, each prescription is half the drug cost, \$28.07 vs. \$57.27
- ❖ Pharmacies in AB, SK, and NL serve the fewest number of persons. Geography may play a role (SK and NL have the lowest population density of all provinces)³ but it does not explain why there are so many pharmacies per person in Alberta.
- ❖ Alberta has the highest growth in overall population, seniors population, prescriptions, and the number of pharmacies, suggesting all are related



Historical Growth Trends^{1,4}

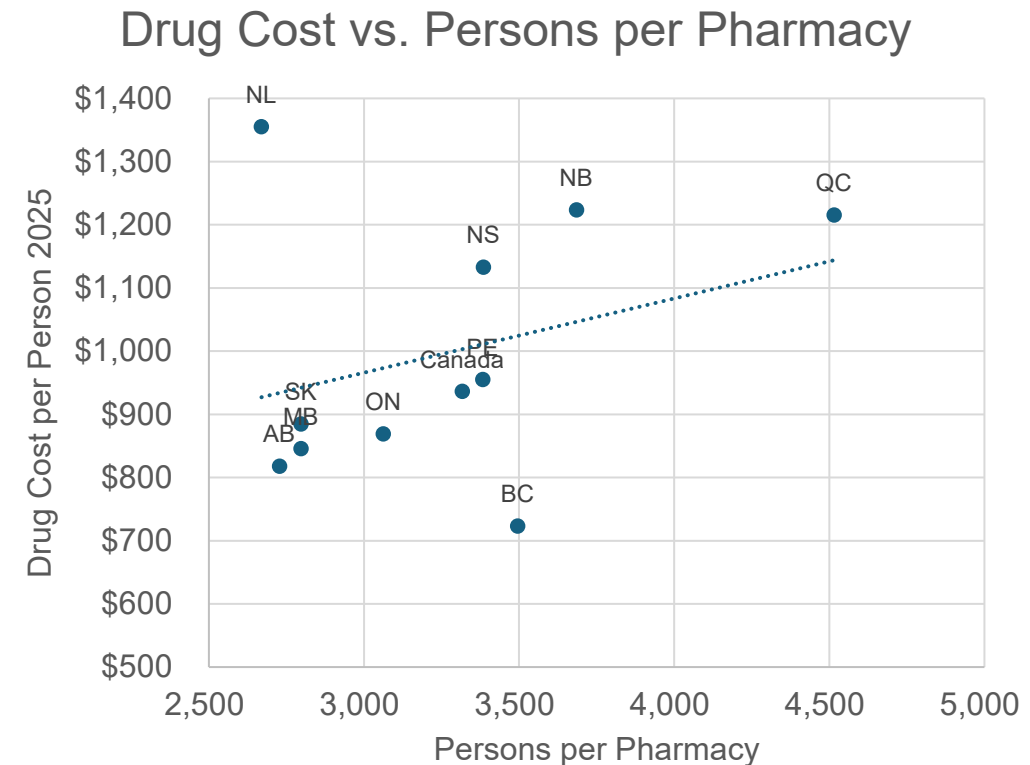
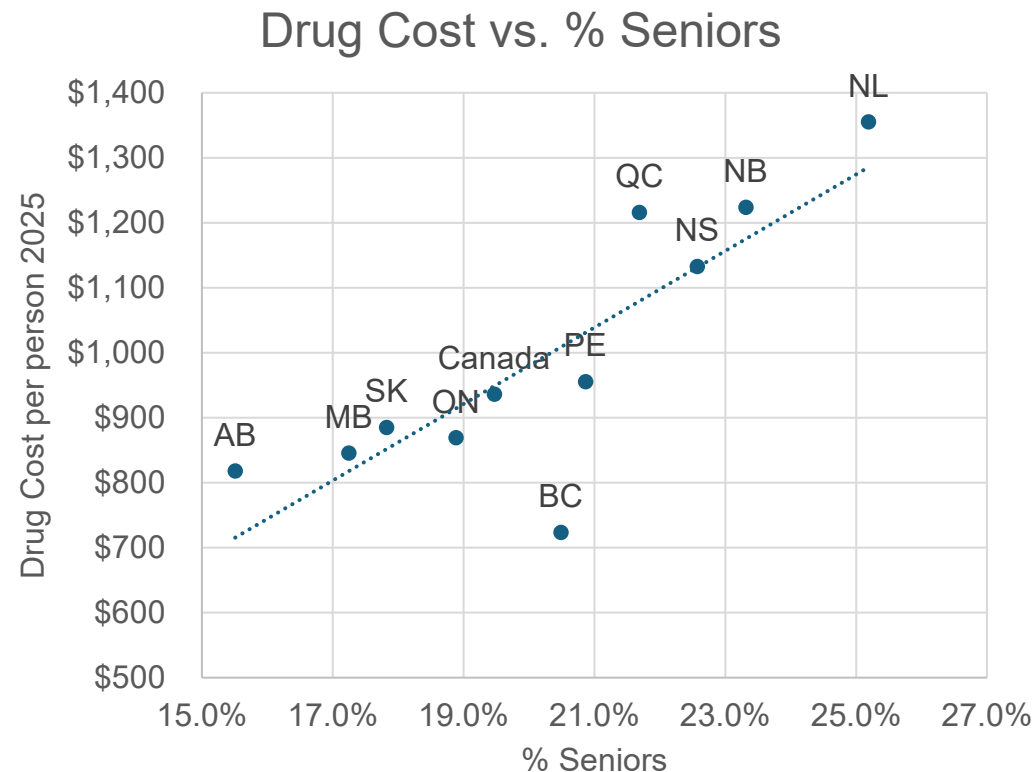
Figure 1. Ten-Year Growth Trend, Population vs Number of Pharmacies



Historical pharmacy counts sourced from NAPRA and may vary from IQVIA data elsewhere in this analysis.

Drug Cost Correlation: Seniors vs Persons/Pharmacy^{1,2}

Figure 2. Drug Cost per Person vs. Percent Seniors and Persons per Pharmacy



Drug cost appears proportional to number of seniors, but unrelated to number of pharmacies

Insights: Key Findings

- ❖ Pharmacy growth has not kept pace with Canada's aging population. Since the pandemic, the number of pharmacies has increased faster than overall population growth, but significantly slower than growth in the senior population (See Figure 1)
- ❖ Population aging—not pharmacies—may be the primary driver of prescription drug spending. Jurisdictions with larger senior populations consistently experience higher drug costs per person. (See Figure 2.)
- ❖ More pharmacies does not equal higher drug spending. There is no observable relationship between the number of pharmacies in a jurisdiction and prescription drug costs per person. (See Figure 2.)
- ❖ Pharmacy growth is expanding in response to population growth. As Canada's population grows, the number of community pharmacies grows alongside it to maintain access to care.



Key Takeaways

- The Quebec pharmacy landscape is quite different from the rest of Canada, with many more prescriptions per person and fewer pharmacies per person.
- Drug costs are unrelated to the number of pharmacies but do correlate with the percentage of seniors
- The number of pharmacies in Canada generally increases somewhat faster than the overall population but not as fast as the increase in Seniors

References

1. Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0005-01 Population estimates on July 1, by age and gender.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710000501>
2. IQVIA, Rx Premium data to the end of December 2025
3. Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0001-01 Population and dwelling counts: Canada, provinces and territories.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810000101>
4. National Statistics, National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, accessed May 2026. <https://www.napra.ca/resources/national-statistics/>

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