

Date:

Honourable Patty Hajdu, MP
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

RE: National Pharmacare Program

I am writing to you today to recommend that the Federal Government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, establish a National Publicly Funded Prescription Drug Program (Pharmacare) to provide universal coverage of prescription medication for all Canadians.

A national pharmacare plan is much needed in our country. Canada is the only OECD country with a single payer universal health care coverage system, that does not include prescription drugs outside of hospital. I am not the only one asking for such a plan. According to polling done by the Angus Reid Institute, 91 % of Canadians, think such a plan is a good idea. And even more Albertans (92%), of which I am one, agree.

The idea of universal pharmacare is not new. Justice Emmet Hall of the Royal Commission on Health Services, recommended in 1964 that national pharmacare should follow the Medical Care Act, which was enacted back in 1966. Unfortunately, universal pharmacare has never been implemented.

With the release of the Parliamentary Budget Office Report of September 28, 2017, I was heartened to hear we could save over 4 billion dollars per year, with a National Pharmacare Plan. I am also encouraged by the Standing Committee on Health's report released April 18, 2018 – *Pharmacare Now: Prescription Medication Coverage for all Canadians*, that recommends the Canada Health Act be expanded to include prescription drugs. And, the final report of the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare – *A Prescription for Canada: Achieving Pharmacare for All*, recommending universal, single payer pharmacare.

When I read statistics that claim millions of Canadians do not have *any* drug coverage, and even if they do, the copayment is often too much for them to pay, it leaves me wondering why we tolerate this patchwork insurance coverage, with variant coverage, from province to province.

What we need in our country is a pharmacare plan that covers *all* Canadians. This would help the one in five people paying out of pocket for their medication today, either because they don't have a prescription drug plan, or because they cannot afford copayments. Pharmacare would help ALL Canadians. For example, the 2.8 million workers who are self employed, and not covered by a plan.

Canada cannot afford NOT to implement a National Pharmacare Plan. The current situation is putting a strain on Canadians and our Medicare system. The only way to make the system sustainable is to go with a single payer universal coverage pharmacare plan. Bulk buying of drugs would bring down the costs, at a savings calculated to be approximately 7.3 billion a year. It would save money, and it would save lives.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,