



April 28, 2020

Mr. Glen Doucet
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Pharmacists Association
1785 Alta Vista Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3Y6

VIA Email: gdoucet@pharmacists.ca service@pharmacists.ca info@pharmacists.ca

Re: Dispensing Fees at Pharmacies

Dear Mr. Doucet,

We're living in extraordinary times as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause a public health crisis in Canada and around the world.

Our country is on a virtual lockdown and millions of Canadians have lost their primary source of income. Families are struggling to pay the rent or mortgage, pay monthly bills and put food on the table.

To make matters worse, a recent decision from the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) has made it more expensive for people to get the medications they need.

As you know, in response to the pandemic, the CPhA determined that pharmacies should limit refills to 30 days instead of 90. This is intended to reduce possible drug shortages.

However, the problem with this decision is that it hurts Canadians by forcing them to pay for a dispensing fee every month for each 30-day refill, instead of paying one dispensing fee for the customary 90-day refill.

The CPhA decision is especially impactful for people on fixed incomes, such as seniors, who are made even more vulnerable by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Your decision is additionally forcing people to visit the pharmacy more often than usual to get monthly refills. This increases the risk of infection for people who have underlying medical conditions and are living with disabilities.

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People will be forced to skip their medications or cut their pills in half to stretch their prescriptions in order to avoid the extra pharmacy dispensing fees.

I urge you to immediately recommend that pharmacies waive the dispensing fees for refills on medications that would usually be filled for more than 30-days, to lessen the financial burden and eliminate the additional barriers to people getting the medications they need.

In times of a crisis, true leaders step up and take action to support the common good. I invite you to be that leader at this defining moment in our country's history.

Sincerely,



Stephen von Sychowski
President, Vancouver and District Labour Council

cc: The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, patty.hajdu@parl.gc.ca
Tyler Gogo, Strategic Communications Manager, CPhA, tgogo@pharmacists.ca
Ron Stipp, Canadian Labour Congress, rstipp@clctc.ca
VDLC Executive