



**Neighbourhood  
Pharmacy**  
Association of Canada

Association canadienne  
**des pharmacies  
de quartier**

**Office of the Chief Executive Officer**

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Monday, November 16, 2020

Ben Chin  
Senior Advisor  
Prime Minister's Office  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A3

**RE: Complete the Plan**

Dear Ben,

My name is Sandra Hanna and I am a community pharmacist and independent pharmacy owner / operator in Guelph, Ontario. I'm also the CEO of the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada, a group that represents the operators of Canada's approximately 11,000 chain and banner community pharmacies, as well as grocery chains and mass merchandisers with pharmacies. We are focused on the business of community pharmacy to ensure our members can continue to deliver the convenient, professional patient care services and products on which Canadians rely.

We know how important it is for Canadians to have access to safe, effective, and cost-efficient healthcare. We also know, first hand, how much Canadians value the trusted support and services they receive from their local pharmacists. This has been especially evident during these difficult times.

We understand that there will be a debate on November 18, for the NDP's Canada Pharmacare Act.

We are asking you to ensure that all Canadians have access to the medications they need. Based on my experience with patients in my community, and the experience of our members who serve millions of Canadians every day, 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, especially during a global pandemic.

Our Association serves 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 first and most frequent touchpoint most Canadians have with the health system and are a key community resource in both urban and rural communities. Our pharmacies act as integral points of patient care. We provide our 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.

In summer 2019, we asked Canadians — more than 5,000 of them — about what national pharmacare approach would work best for them. We found that:

- A majority (52 per cent) support a national supplemental drug plan that pays for drugs for Canadians who are not currently covered as well as the full cost of catastrophic drugs and rare disease.
- More Canadians (42 per cent) are opposed to a public national pharmacare plan, as proposed by the Advisory Council, than in support (36 per cent). A minority (22 per cent) are indifferent.
- Three-quarters (76 per cent) prefer that the federal government introduce a supplementary drug plan allowing for investments in other key priorities.

We are currently conducting a follow-up survey to update our findings. I am happy to share this revised data once it comes in next month.

Lastly, I am sharing below the principles of our advocacy to ensure that all Canadians have the coverage they need based on our research and our members' vast experience caring for Canadians. I have also attached a one-page graphic that provides a high-level overview of the pharmacy sector in Canada.

I would be happy to meet virtually to discuss this further and encourage you to visit the [website](#) to learn more.

#### **Our Principles:**

- All Canadians deserve access to the medications they need to live a healthy life.
- No Canadian should have to decide between paying for required prescription medications or putting food on the table.
- Few Canadians do not have extensive drug coverage or are underinsured, which is why we believe it is essential that changes to the prescription drug coverage system specifically address those most in need.
- Canada's priority should be helping those who don't have coverage and those with insufficient coverage, without disrupting the majority of Canadians who do have drug coverage.
- The federal government should also focus on supporting vulnerable populations and Canadians who are underinsured by covering the full cost of catastrophic and rare disease drugs.
- By building on the existing mix of private and public drug coverage, the federal government can achieve a universal pharmacare plan that allows Canadians the choice to keep their current plans and continue accessing the medications they're used to, at a cost significantly less than the estimated \$15 billion in new spending, freeing up dollars to be spent in high priority areas.
- Disrupting our medication system during the pandemic could lead to expanding gaps in care not closing them – as [98.5 per cent of Canadians have maintained their prescription drug coverage during the pandemic](#), and access to drugs remains stable.
- Canada should remain focused on fighting COVID-19 and recovering from the pandemic. The virus has had disproportionate impacts on many areas of healthcare like long-term care, senior care, home care, and mental health care, and has highlighted challenges relating to pharmaceutical supply and drug shortages. These are the areas where the government should be investing tax dollars to improve.

Sincerely,



Sandra Hanna, RPh.  
Chief Executive Officer

# EXPANDING ACCESS & ADVANCING CARE



## WHO AM I?:

I am an independent pharmacist and a member of the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada.

## WHAT IS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PHARMACY ASSOCIATION OF CANADA?:

Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada represents Canada's leading pharmacy organizations who deliver high value, quality care to Canadians in all models including chain, banner, long-term care, specialty and independent pharmacies as well as grocery chains and mass merchandisers with pharmacies. The Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada's members are home to the most trusted providers of drug therapies, pharmacy-based patient services and innovative health care solutions.

## THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PHARMACY ASSOCIATION OF CANADA'S VISION:

Ensuring all Canadians have access to the prescription they need.



1,300

The average number of patients managed by each pharmacist.



92%

of Canadians believe pharmacists play an essential role in our health care system.



600M

prescriptions safely dispensed every year.



10x

more patient visits than family doctors.

## THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PHARMACY ASSOCIATION OF CANADA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES



### EQUITY

Every Canadian should have equitable and consistent access to necessary prescription medications.



### TIMELINESS OF ACCESS

Canadians should be able to access the medicines they need in a timely manner.



### APPROPRIATENESS OF THERAPY

All Canadians should have access to high quality medications that are appropriate to their individual needs.



### AFFORDABILITY

All Canadians should be able to afford their medications at the point of care.



### SUSTAINABILITY

All Canadians should benefit from a pharmacare system that ensures ongoing health system sustainability.