



**Neighbourhood
Pharmacy**
Association of Canada

Association canadienne
**des pharmacies
de quartier**

Office of the Chief Executive Officer

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December 9, 2020

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Health
MLA for Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland
Room 204, Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

RE: Congratulatory Letter and Introduction to Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada

Dear Minister Merriman,

On behalf of [Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada \(Neighbourhood Pharmacies\)](http://neighbourhoodpharmacies.ca), I would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Minister of Health for the province of Saskatchewan.

Neighbourhood Pharmacies represents Canada's leading pharmacy organizations, including chain, banner, long-term care, specialty pharmacies, grocery chains, and mass merchandisers with pharmacies. We seek to advance healthcare for Canadians by leveraging close to 11,000 pharmacies conveniently located in communities throughout the country as integral points of patient care. We are focused on the business of community pharmacies, and work to ensure that our members can continue to deliver the convenient, professional patient care, products and service. The economic footprint of the pharmacy sector in Saskatchewan is estimated at over \$558 million in GDP and 8,300 jobs. Our commitment to our communities and to our patients is repaid in trust, as 80 per cent of Canadians consult their pharmacists for professional healthcare, at nearly 400 community pharmacies across the province. In our role as an advocate for our members, we strive to develop and offer innovative solutions to help advance needed change in the healthcare delivery system.

Pharmacies work collaboratively with their patients and with other healthcare providers to prevent admissions to hospital, prevent premature admissions into long-term care, help patients transition back into community after hospital discharge, and maximize the time patients can live independently in their homes. Improved transitions between the community and hospital will help patients retain and regain independence and reduce the number of hospital readmissions, and help ensure people get the right healthcare, from the right providers, at the right time, and in the right location.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are proud of the role pharmacies have played in supporting the healthcare system and are well positioned to provide more assistance should it be needed or required. During this crisis, pharmacies have been happy to play their part in managing the increased healthcare needs of their patients and customers when patients had reduced access to their physicians. As a result of ability to prescribe treatments for common ailments, pharmacies have contributed to decreasing physician visits, which can take up to 10-20 per cent of physicians' time and decreased the pressures on an already strained system.

We continue to offer our support to do more, including an expanded role in immunizations beyond flu, including pneumonia, COVID-19, and other routine child and adult immunizations, expanded support for the opioid crisis through naloxone programs, as well as broader roles in the health system, public health and primary care.

We work closely with the Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS) and are aligned on the critical role that pharmacies and pharmacists can play in supporting the Public Health response and recovery as well as the economic recovery in Saskatchewan. A strong and sustainable pharmacy sector underlie the sector's ability to continue to drive value for the health system and to be an accessible and reliable healthcare destination for residents of Saskatchewan.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, in collaboration with our provincial partners at PAS, and discuss how community pharmacies can assist the province in its delivery of quality healthcare to its residents. I can be reached at shanna@neighbourhoodpharmacies.ca to determine dates and times that would be convenient for you, either for a teleconference or virtual meeting, to plan and discuss how pharmacy can continue to effectively support the Saskatchewan government in its efforts.

Once again, congratulations. The people of Saskatchewan will continue to be well served under the strong leadership and vision of a Saskatchewan Party government. Thank you again for your time and we look forward to working with you on these important issues over the coming months.

Sincerely,



Sandra Hanna, RPh.
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Dawn Martin, CEO, Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan