



**Neighbourhood
Pharmacy**
Association of Canada

Association canadienne
**des pharmacies
de quartier**

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Honourable Tyler Shandro

423 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
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March 20, 2020

Dear Minister Shandro,

As Covid-19 spreads and more cases are identified in Alberta, and with the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre, the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada (Neighbourhood Pharmacies) would like to offer our support.

The Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada advocates for pharmacies' role in caring for Canadians – behind the counter and in front of it. As the healthcare needs and expectations of Canadians are constantly evolving, we connect our members to the tools and information needed to keep pace. We support the full range of Canadian pharmacies, including chain, banner, long-term care and specialty pharmacies, as well as grocery chains and mass merchandisers with pharmacies, with a focus on improving the delivery of care. We aim to advance healthcare for all Albertans by leveraging the over 1,500 pharmacies conveniently located in neighbourhoods across the province as integral points of patient care.

Pharmacists are trusted by Albertans. The pharmacist is quite often the first point of contact in our provincial health care system. For many Albertans, pharmacists represent an important frontline health worker and primary care provider.

Neighbourhood Pharmacies is aligned with the Alberta Pharmacists Association (RxA) in their desire to assist Albertans; not only in receiving information on COVID-19, but also by facilitating testing and care.

With pharmacists uniquely positioned to mitigate the stress currently placed on the Health Link and physician offices, we are very pleased to see the announcement that pharmacists in Alberta are now able to assess and screen Albertans for COVID-19. We believe this will help alleviate strains on all area of the health system and will help Albertans have peace of mind.

As the situation continues to evolve, the participation of pharmacists in the future also needs to be considered in terms of the role they can play in the distribution of COVID-19 test kits and vaccinations, once these elements become widely available.

We understand RxA is working with the Alberta College of Pharmacy, Alberta Health Services, and Alberta Health to rapidly recognize the need to identify pharmacies as essential services for Albertans. Particularly in the context of this crisis, it's more important than ever to support

pharmacists' ability to manage the drug supply chain, gain access to personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as stock adequate supplies of sanitizers and other disinfectant products needed to facilitate safe pharmacy operations.

In addition to Pharmacy being acknowledged as an essential service, we also recommend that pharmacists be included as a vital stakeholder in emergency planning and preparedness for Alberta. While we recognize the Emergency Operations Centre is up and running, we committedly offer that Neighbourhood Pharmacies' members are ready and willing to provide assistance as emergency plans are operationalized in the province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hanna', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Sandra Hanna, RPh
Chief Executive Officer
Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada