

Joint Letter in Support of a Canadian Universal Pharmacare Program

Unifor and _____ both recognize their commitment to the importance of the well-being of citizens as the foundation of a healthy, engaged and economically vibrant community.

Over 3 million Canadians, including many in our local communities, don't take medicines prescribed by their doctors because they can't afford them. Additionally, over 8 million working Canadians do not have prescription drug coverage.

Canada is currently the only country with a national medicare program that does not have a national pharmacare program. Studies have concluded that countries with such coverage achieve better access to medicines and greater financial protection for the ill - at significantly lower costs. Every major commission or study in Canada, dating back to the 1964 Royal Commission on Health Services, the 1996 National Forum on Health and the 2002 Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada has recommended extending coverage to include prescription drugs.

More recent studies show that a national drug plan could be financed with potentially no increase to government costs and save Canadians billions of dollars annually. Even the federal Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) estimates minimum savings of at least \$4 billion annually based on the most comprehensive drug coverage.

A universal pharmacare plan for Canada would improve access and affordability through bulk purchase and negotiated pricing with drug manufacturers; and it would eliminate duplication and cost-shifting amongst existing payers, while promoting integration amongst health care providers.

To this end, Unifor and _____ jointly urge the federal, provincial and territorial governments to take immediate action in instituting a national, universally-accessible Pharmacare program.

Sincerely,

Jerry Dias
National President
Unifor