

An Open Letter to the First Ministers

The current discussion about a Canadian pharmacare program is missing a vital perspective. *Who speaks for the patient?*

While the First Ministers squabble about who pays for pharmacare the answer is obvious to most of us: taxpayers are already footing the bill.

No matter which level of government owns the program, pharmacare plans need to be fair and equitable: getting the right drugs to the right people at the right time.

Where You Live Matters

Public drug plans are different across Canada: eligibility, deductibles and the drugs approved for coverage are different. Patients in Prince Edward Island or Ontario will not be covered for medications that are paid in British Columbia or Quebec. What they all have in common is the long delay in putting new drugs on their list of benefits and the hurdles they create for anyone who needs a newly discovered treatment.

Will the First Ministers talk about this? Fair and equitable drug coverage across the country: an agreement to provide for essential medications based on evidence of effectiveness, patient needs and the clinical judgment of the doctor.

Patients Want Action

Patients are frustrated and suffering from the ongoing bickering between governments. We need to see some meaningful dialogue and concrete outcomes that will benefit patients and improve their quality of life.

What We Recommend

- Ensure that all Canadians get the medicines they need, regardless of where they live, their age or economic status.
- Make sure patients' groups are included when governments meet to negotiate health issues.
- Remove the barriers that limit people's ability to get the medicines that would best treat their condition.

About Us

The Best Medicines Coalition is an alliance of representatives from a broad base of organizations and Canadians concerned about effective health care. The group believes that safe, timely and equitable access to the best evidence-based medicines is a key component of effective health care.

The members of the BMC represent millions of Canadians living with or affected by chronic disease or illness.

This letter is endorsed by:

*The Arthritis Society
The Asthma Society of Canada
Arthritis Consumer Experts
CARP – Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus
Canadian Treatment Action Council
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
Canadian Breast Cancer Network
Cancer Advocacy Coalition of Canada
Canadian Hepatitis C Network/ Hepatitis C Foundation of Québec
Canadian Cancer Advocacy Network
The Canadian Hemophilia Society
Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada
HepCURE
Yellowhead Tribal Council (representing five First Nations groups in Alberta).*



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