Pharmacare

A PLAN FOR EVERYONE

Why pharmacare?

Canada's unions are proud that we've won health insurance coverage for many of our members. But we believe anyone with a health card should have coverage for the medicines they need. That's why we're working to win a universal prescription drug plan that covers everyone in Canada, regardless of their income, age or where they work or live.

The unfinished business of medicare

Today, the only place where all Canadians are covered is in the hospital. The federal government covers the cost of prescription drugs for members of the Armed Forces and the RCMP, veterans and Indigenous people.

The provinces and territories all provide different coverage. Most subsidize the cost of medications for vulnerable Canadians like those over 65 and recipients of social assistance and disability benefits. Many also provide catastrophic coverage for those with astronomical medical costs.

But that still leaves one in five Canadians paying out of pocket for their medication because they either don't have a prescription drug plan, or have plans that don't cover the cost.

By the numbers

- About one third of working Canadians don't have employer-funded prescription drug coverage.
- The less you earn at work, the less likely you are to have prescription drug coverage.
- Women and young workers are less likely to have the coverage they need.
- Even those with drug plans are paying ever-increasing co-payments and deductibles.

Pharmacare makes economic sense

Canada is the only developed country in the world with a universal health care program that doesn't include a universal prescription drug plan. Instead, our multiple-payer system has resulted in the second highest prescription drug costs in the world next to the United States.

Our patchwork prescription drug system is inefficient and expensive. It has left Canadians with wildly varying prescription drug coverage and access. Many are paying different rates for the same medications.