DRAFT DO NOT CIRCULATE

**Pharmacare**

**Key message**

A national pharmacare program would cut costs, allow for better monitoring of medications, lead to a healthier population and reduce the burden on other parts of the health care system.

**What’s the issue?**

Canada is the only country with universal health care that does not also provide universal drug coverage. While some have estimated establishing a pharmacare system could cost approximately $4 billion, the government could save an estimated $11 billion a year.

A coordinated, national pharmacare program would also cut costs to individuals, allow for better monitoring of the effectiveness and safety of medications, lead to a healthier population and reduce the burden on other medical treatments.

**Some challenges**

**High drug costs:** Of the 32 most industrialized countries, Canada pays the second highest per capita for prescription drugs.

**Lack of coverage:** 3.5 million Canadians have no drug coverage whatsoever, and one in five Canadians leave prescriptions unfilled because they can’t afford them.

**Influence of pharmaceutical companies:** These companies spend an average of $36,000 per doctor, per year, promoting their products.

**For more information**

Canadian Health Coalition

<http://healthcoalition.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Policy-Brief-NPDP.pdf>

Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare

[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/public-engagement/external-advisory-bodies/implementation-national-pharmacare.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/public-engagement/external-advisory-bodies/implementation-national-pharmacare.html)

**Questions**

* How can the provincial and federal levels of government work together to create a universal drug plan?
* The federal government already provides prescription drugs to First Nations, veterans, the military, refugees and prisoners. How would you see the government’s role evolving in implementing universal drug coverage for the remainder of Canadians?
* What obstacles might hinder implementing a pharmacare system?

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