



## Pharmacare in Canada by the Numbers

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### Inadequate access

- Nearly 25% of households include someone who is not taking their prescription medicines as prescribed because of cost.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately 8.4 million working people living in Canada (self-employed and in paid employment) do not have employer-based health benefits.<sup>2</sup>
- One in 10 patients cannot afford to take their prescribed medicines at all.<sup>3</sup>
- Research in CFNU's *Body Count* suggests that about 1,000 patients die each year from just two health conditions, diabetes and ischemic heart disease, because of the prohibitive cost of prescription drugs.<sup>4</sup>

### High cost for governments, individuals and business

- Canada's per capita prescription drug prices are the third highest in the world, behind only the U.S. and Switzerland.<sup>5</sup>
- Prescription drug costs have risen dramatically in the past 20 years, surpassing physician fees to become the second most expensive category in the delivery of Canadian health care.<sup>6</sup>
- From 2006 to 2015, Canada wasted \$62 billion health care dollars without pharmacare.<sup>7</sup>
- We continue to waste \$7.3 billion per year, equaling \$14,000 squandered health care dollars every minute of every day, without pharmacare.<sup>8</sup>
- People with little or no coverage spend more than \$6 billion per year out of pocket on medicines they need.<sup>9</sup>
- The proportion of out-of-pocket expenditures for prescription drugs has risen to 22% over the past few years, representing a significant and growing financial burden for families.<sup>10</sup>
- Similarly, Canadian businesses are increasingly seeing their bottom lines eroded by the high costs of extended health insurance programs that cover increasingly expensive pharmaceuticals.

### Potential savings

- CFNU's *Roadmap to a Rational Pharmacare Policy in Canada* estimated savings of between \$9 and 11 billion.<sup>11</sup>
- Steve Morgan estimated the costs of a universal pharmacare plan in an article published in 2015 and found universal public drug coverage would reduce overall total spending on prescription drugs in Canada by \$7.3 billion per year with costs to government increasing by about \$1 billion.<sup>12</sup>
- In September 2017, in a costing document the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) conservatively estimated the annual savings potential of a national pharmacare plan at \$4.2 billion.<sup>13</sup>

### Support for pharmacare

- House of Commons Standing Committee on Health<sup>14</sup>
- Over 280 Canadian academics<sup>15</sup>
- The Canadian Labour Congress representing 3.3 million workers across Canada<sup>16</sup>
- The Canadian public: 91% support a national prescription drug plan<sup>17</sup>
- Municipal governments, provincial governments and business groups, including the B.C. Chamber of Commerce<sup>18</sup>

## Sources

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- <sup>4</sup> Lopert, R., Morgan, S., Docteur, E. (2018). *Body Count*. Ottawa : CFNU.
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- <sup>13</sup> PBO. (2017). *Federal Cost of a National Pharmacare Program*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/Pharmacare>
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