

St.Andrews Pharmacy Ltd.
192 Water St.
St.Andrews, N.B. E5B 1B2

August 15, 2011

The Honourable Madeleine Dube,
Minister of Health, Government of New Brunswick
Department of Health,
PO Box 5100,
Fredericton, New Brunswick,
E3B 5GB

Dear Minister,

I am writing this in response to a call for submissions in regard to fair drug prices for New Brunswickers. I am a community pharmacist who has been practicing in the province of New Brunswick for 27 years and currently the owner of three small independent pharmacies in Charlotte County. (St.Andrews Pharmacy Ltd. In St.Andrews, St.George Pharmacy Ltd. in St.George and Herring Cove Pharmacy Ltd on Campobello Island). While I support the concept of lower drug prices for the people of this province, I feel there are several points which I must call attention to.

As part of the the New Brunswick Health care team we are the most accessible and offer advice on a daily basis both to patients with or without a family physician. We often help patients deal with minor ailments that undoubtedly saves countless trips to physicians offices, as well as emergency departments, thereby saving the health care system a considerable expense. I have also personally given hundreds of immunizations as well as other injections, again taking tremendous pressure of the health care system with wait times and finances.

The fact is that many studies have shown that the price of dispensing a prescription is well over \$12.00, yet the present dispensing fee from the province is \$9.40. Over the past decade NBPDP says it expenditures have doubled yet dispensing fees have only gone up \$1.00. There has been much discussion regarding trade allowances being the key reason for the increase cost of generic medications. Allowances from generic manufacturers have been an indirect source of funding to pharmacies and have been used to subsidize the cost of providing pharmacy services to NBPDP recipients as well as the private sector, as they cover the difference between what is directly paid as a dispensing fee and what it actually costs to provide the service.

There are many more facts and statistics I could bring to your attention but I am sure you already have those from my colleagues and at your disposal. The fact is that I love what I do and the people I care for but the profession must be sustainable. I and my employees (70 plus) serve a very rural area with Campobello being the most remote. We hope to carry on this service for decades to come and work in partnership with the province to attain better health care outcomes.

Sincerely,

Fred Armstrong,
St.Andrews Pharmacy
St.George Pharmacy
Herring Cove Pharmacy