

Herring Cove Pharmacy 2005 Ltd.

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August 14, 2011

The Honourable Madeleine Dube

Minister of Health, Government of New Brunswick

Department of Health

PO Box 5100

Fredericton, New Brunswick

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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 pharmacist and owner of a small rural prescription centre in a small fishing community of around a 1000 people. My store is the most consistent health care presence in the community, with a physician who currently travels here for 2-3 days per week and a nurse practitioner who is also here 1-2 days per week. Our store is around 550 sq ft in total size with

prescription sales comprising well over 90% of our stores revenue. We have a staff of 1 full-time and 2 part time employees. The closest competing pharmacy is a short 160 km round trip drive for the residents . Residents, especially seniors and the disabled, depend heavily on the pharmacy and our services.

The impact of the proposed changes to pharmacy funding could be catastrophic for my store and the community as a whole. Over the past 10 years dispensing fees have remained flat and small pharmacies, such as mine, have become heavily dependant on professional allowances to remain profitable. If these allowances were to disappear or be greatly reduced , without appropriate changes to dispensing fees and re-instituting a mark-up, it would probably force our pharmacy to close. The impact of this would be devastating to the community and the health care of the residents.

I am in favour of a sustainable and transparent pharmacy funding model. This model hopefully will allow a store such as mine to be profitable, with less of a dependance on professional allowances and rather be properly reimbursed for the services we currently offer. Services such as compliance packaging, collection and disposal of unwanted medications, delivery of prescriptions, prescribing/refilling/adapting prescriptions, consultation for minor ailments and medication management.

When I recently reviewed your website "Fair Drug Pricing", I was surprised to see that when talking about prescription drug costs there was no mention of dispensing fees and a mark-up on drugs. We currently have one of the lowest levels of reimbursement for both dispensing fees and mark-up of all the provinces in Canada. I was disappointed to see that this was not a fair or complete assessment of the current situation.

In conclusion, I feel that community pharmacists provide a central role in the health care system and my store specifically plays a central role in our community. When you are considering altering the funding model for pharmacies please consider the impact such changes will have in small rural communities. Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

Gareth Smith

Pharmacist Owner

Herring Cove Pharmacy