

Fair Drug Prices for New Brunswickers

Aug 15, 2011

Submitted by: George Murray Pharmacist-Owner

Tantramar Pharmacy, Sackville N.B.

Past President Canadian Pharmacists Association

There is no doubt that all areas of Canada are facing challenges in health care delivery. We must all be creative and work together to make sure we have sustainable models that work. Generic drug pricing changes have become part of that solution. We must be aware that changing the current model of pricing will have financial consequences to pharmacists and we must structure a new model for reimbursement to pharmacists at the same time as implementing pricing changes. This will allow pharmacists to continue to offer quality care in challenging times.

Over the last decade there has been an underfunding of pharmacists services by government and other third party payers . This short fall has been managed to a great extent through trade allowances by manufacturers. This process is not a clear and transparent one, and as such not the most desirable one. However a move away from this model must be done in a way that allows pharmacy to remain sustainable. We can use this opportunity to create a sustainable model for core dispensing and open the door to the creation of paid enhanced pharmacy services like prescription adaptation, NB Pharmacheck, NB Diabetes Check, therapeutic management, injection of medication, adherence packaging, and disease management.

Pharmacists need to play a greater role in the delivery of primary health care if we as a society are going to be successful in facing the challenges ahead. New Brunswick needs a vision for health care and pharmacists need to be part of that vision.

We have the opportunity to create the best solutions for this transition by working together government and pharmacists. The delivery of pharmacy services is a complex model that has many moving parts. It is essential that the pharmacists who deliver the services be involved in the creation of a new model. Not just through consultations but in a meaningful partnership to jointly craft a viable new model.

We are faced with huge decisions. We have the benefit of learning from other provinces. We have a willing partner in pharmacy in New Brunswick. We have an opportunity to “get it done right”. Let’s not waste the opportunity.