

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NB Department of Health's "Fair Drugs Prices for New Brunswickers". I am an independent pharmacist under the Pharmasave banner. My pharmacy employs three people in the Town of Oromocto. Our pharmacy plays an important role in the community in the provision of front-line health care services, including the dispensing of generic drugs. Community pharmacies, in particular, help to improve access, safety, health outcomes, and stem rising health care costs.

I share the Government's objective of ensuring reasonable drug prices for New Brunswick taxpayers. In addition, as a professional pharmacist and as a member of my community, I want to ensure that whatever changes are put in place do not have any negative impacts on the customers I serve. It is also important to ensure that pharmacists are fairly compensated for the core dispensing services, and expanded pharmacy services, we provide.

In this regard, as the Government considers options to reduce generic drug prices, it is important to realize that this could have significant impacts on our business model. Reductions in pharmacists' compensation for generic drug prices in isolation will create financial uncertainty for pharmacies and professional uncertainty for pharmacists.

For this reason, it is critical that whatever changes are introduced are done so in a measured way. In particular, I urge the Government to consider an appropriate phase-in or transition period, of several years. This will allow pharmacies to plan and adjust as necessary, and in this way will ultimately support the long-term sustainability of any changes introduced by the Government. I am concerned that the dramatic and abrupt changes introduced in other provinces will jeopardize my ability to deliver the access and quality of care that my community expects and deserves. If core dispensing services proves to be financially unsustainable, then pharmacies will be unable to provide valuable pharmacy services such as immunizations, prescription adaptations, prescribing, therapeutic substitution, or Pharmacheck.

I am hopeful that the Government will find strategies to reduce the costs of health care services to New Brunswickers to ensure a high quality and sustainable health care system. As a professional independent pharmacist, I believe I have an important and constructive role to play. However, I also hope that the Government will not make changes that will unnecessarily disrupt services to my clients or to the financial sustainability of my pharmacy. To these ends, I ask that the Government:

- Continue discussions with the pharmacy industry
- Consider all aspects of the business and practice of pharmacies, not just generic pricing
- Include a commitment to reimburse pharmacies fairly for the services they provide

Thank you once again for the opportunity to comment, and to your kind consideration of my submission.

Best Regards,

Gerard Gilbert
Riverside Pharmasave
1625 Onondaga St.
Oromocto, NB
506-357-3302
riverphy@nbnet.nb.ca