

Re: FAIR DRUG PRICES FOR NEW BRUNSWICKERS

We at Hampton Pharmacy support the N.B. government in its effort to obtain lower drug prices for New Brunswickers. My name is Lew Moulton and I have been a community pharmacist and owner of Hampton Pharmacy for over forty years. We currently employ approximately 30 people in full-time and part-time positions.

We are very concerned about the potential for unintended consequences if great care is not taken in the design and implementation of this initiative. The negative effects could be serious and far reaching. We could see staff layoffs, reduced hours, curtailed economic activity - cancelled plans for renovations and expansions; significant reductions in financial support for numerous local organizations. We could also be faced with the inability to find the time to volunteer with various committees and organizations. We could very well see some community pharmacies, in small towns, become unsustainable. Thus some areas could be deprived of their only local health care services. The negative effects could be most damaging to independent pharmacies in small towns. Unlike larger corporate pharmacies in cities these pharmacies rely on their dispensaries for a very large proportion of their sales.

Failure to make changes in a sustainable way will have a serious impact on the level of services provided to our clients. Surveys indicate that pharmacists are the most accessible members of the health care team. We are there when the doctor is away, or on vacation, or can't be reached. We are there to help people who don't have a doctor. We may extend a prescription for a chronic medical condition. We may offer advice on general health care, O.T.C. medications, prescription drugs, etc. We may help a client understand their health insurance coverage. We offer clinics, seminars, in-service training sessions for long term care facilities, health information pamphlets, etc. We offer compliance packaging in unit-dose or multi-dose formats to help avoid confusion when taking medications and to help clients remember their medications.

Rebates help to pay for the above services, plus others, since they are not currently funded. Therefore, rebates have become an integral part of our business model as they are in most retail business models.

In the best interests of government, communities, clients, pharmacists and pharmacies we need a New Brunswick solution .We need a comprehensive solution which takes the concerns of all stakeholders into consideration. A solution which deals with new pharmacy services, with the issues surrounding a difficult transition to a new business model, the time required for the transition and the need of pharmacy to be fairly compensated for services provided. Therefore, we strongly suggest continued and genuine efforts to work with the NBPA to find a N.B. solution.

Thank you for considering these comments and for your ongoing efforts to find an equitable solution. Pharmacy cannot bear the full financial burden of these changes.

Yours truly,
Lewis Moulton

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