

To whom it may concern,

I wish to share some of my views regarding Fair Drug Prices for New Brunswick. Reduced **drug** costs are an important part of a sustainable healthcare program. The focus of this initiative lies mainly in reducing the cost of **generic drugs**. Lower priced generic drugs would benefit New Brunswickers but it is only a small part of total **drug** costs. No where in this initiative is there a focus on lowering the cost of **brand name drugs**. Brand name drugs account for the majority of drug costs. I would urge those involved in planning, to investigate how savings could be realized by reducing the cost of brand name drugs as well.

Pharmacists play an important role in healthcare. Pharmacists are often the first health professional patients call upon to assess their illness. Pharmacists make important decisions as to whether patients should be treated through over the counter medicines and appropriate home measures or whether they should be referred to an after hours clinic, the ER or their family practitioner. This front line interaction often saves the healthcare system many dollars in unneeded ER, clinic and physician visits. Patients often remark about how much information and time they get from their pharmacist about their disease state, their medicine, healthy living tips and explanation of tests and lab values. I'm sure pharmacists involved in immunization would all agree that their patients are delighted to have access to this service. Recent changes to the Pharmacy Act to allow pharmacists to amend, adapt or continue prescriptions have also been met with much public applause.

With the change in generic drug pricing, there must be a change in pharmacist reimbursement.

Pharmacist's professional fees for drug distribution have not kept pace with the times. Trade allowances helped offset the imbalance, however, the change in generic drug pricing will erode that margin. Studies have been done which shows a fee of \$12 to \$14/prescription is required to break even. Inventory carrying costs continue to climb as many new expensive biological drugs come to market. A markup should be reinstated on medications that reflects that cost to pharmacy owners. Minimum wage has climbed drastically in the past couple of years. Power rates, phone bills & taxes to name but a few, all continue to climb. I would urge that government leave what is left of the trade allowances alone to aid in the operation of my business.

On a more personal note, I own a pharmacy in a rural community at least 30 minutes from the nearest hospital. I was born and raised in the community I serve. I have strong connections to many of my patients through family and friends. I support many local charities and functions. My staff and I strive to provide the utmost care to all our clientele. We are missing a family physician in our community and the demands are even greater to close the gap that has been left in that care. I feel that government should be paying pharmacists for the assessing, counselling and treatment they prescribe. I feel that there is much more that pharmacists could do, provided they get paid to do so. So much stress could be taken off clinics/ERs if pharmacists were paid to assess and treat minor ailments like minor burns/sunburns, allergies, urinary tract infections, minor muscle/tendon injuries, ear/throat infections, etc. Diabetes education, the NB Pharmacheck Program, smoking cessation counselling & healthy eating are just a few programs pharmacists could be paid to provide and which would have an immediate affect on the health of New Brunswickers. Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission.

Sincerely,

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