

To whom it may concern;

As a pharmacist in NB, I was unaware that we had higher generic drug prices than most provinces in Canada. I was aware that prescription usage was up as the baby boomers age and therefore I am in agreement that a process must occur to lower the price of generic drugs. The government spent 180 million dollars last year on drug programs. Many ideas have circulated and been addressed, but I would like to suggest some ideas to help with pharmacist reimbursement which in the long run will save the province money to tackle these generic drug issues.

Medication reviews must be re-incorporated to help the NBPDP. Many patients do not know why they are taking certain medications. Medication reviews help solve this problem and new ideas are formed with the help of the pharmacist. The pharmacist can help solve drug interactions, adverse events and report to physicians about problems. This can be done via the phone. Many seniors are over prescribed and the pharmacist can help rectify this problem. This saves doctor time and visits, saves NBPDP money for medications and doctor bills, while using an integral part of the health care system, the pharmacist.

A smoking cessation program would help reduce the number of smokers in NB. Smoking is a risk factor for heart attack and stroke, therefore a program in place would help limit these potentially fatal events. A pharmacist could be utilized for this program, and free time for doctors who are overburdened. We, as pharmacists, are trusted by the public and highly accessible to begin smoking cessation in these patients.

Medication reviews are done monthly at the nursing home without reimbursement. This involves a pharmacist, nurse, doctor and nurse practitioner. Our goal is to balance each resident's medication profile and determine what is needed and what is to be discontinued. This can take up to 4 hours for discussion and medication changes. Many residents are on an average of 8-10 medications. The pharmacy that has the contract pays for the pharmacist time, as doctors and nurses are paid for their time. These in depth reviews serve as a cost saving program to the government and should be addressed for drug program dollars.

Our pharmacy also gives money to the nursing home each year. This is for the home to do what they feel is necessary on their part. These dollars come from our dispensing fees. We do not make much per prescription and therefore the rebate dollars from generic companies help pharmacy for these programs and local charities. We are continually giving back to the community, and if these rebate dollars are taken away, then our help to the community will be affected.

As a trusted member of the community and highly accessible, a complete revamping of the health care system is vital to survival. To continue to offer a provincial drug plan, we must adapt and this has to be accomplished by decreased spending while still offering the appropriate services. These services can be accomplished by pharmacists, but must be reimbursed to help sustain the health care system while reducing its burden.

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