Canada is the only country with universal health care that does not include coverage for prescription medication. As a result, Canadians face inequitable access to necessary medication; this inequity is acute amongst vulnerable populations.

Canada’s physicians continue to highlight the serious consequences of ongoing drug shortages on patient care. While moving to a national pharmacare plan, the government must take additional action to manage and resolve the current and emerging shortages in pharmaceutical medication.

Further, the CMA has significant concerns about recent U.S. measures, that if unchecked, will intensify drug shortages by overburdening Canada’s domestic supply of medication.

- **7 in 10** physicians frequently ask patients about drug coverage, indicating coverage is a barrier for many people.
- **46%** of physicians say patients without drug coverage do not fill prescriptions.
- **$6.5 billion** is how much Canadian households spent out of pocket on prescription drugs in 2014.
- **16%** of total health care expenditures in Canada are drug-related.
The CMA calls on federal political parties to commit to:

- Taking immediate measures to prevent and resolve drug shortages, including protecting the Canadian supply of necessary medicines.

What we know

Prescription medications play a critical role in maintaining a high-quality, cost-effective health care system.

In Canada, only Quebec has a universal program for prescription medications.

The high cost of prescription drugs can cause Canadians to skip doses or avoid having prescriptions filled.

A universal, federally funded prescription drug plan would ensure all Canadians have access to the medically necessary prescription drugs they need, regardless of their ability to pay.

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