

Pharmacare



What's the issue?

Canada is the only country with universal health care that does not also provide universal drug coverage. While establishing a pharmacare system would cost approximately \$4 billion, the government would save an estimated \$11 billion a year.

A pharmacare program would also cut costs to individuals; allow for better monitoring of the effectiveness and safety of medications; lead to a healthier population; and reduce the burden on other medical treatments.

Some challenges

High drug costs: Of the 32 most industrialized countries, Canada pays the second highest per capita costs for prescription drugs.

Lack of coverage: 3.5 million Canadians have no drug coverage whatsoever, and countless others leave prescriptions unfilled because they can't afford them.

Influence of pharmaceutical companies: These companies spend an average of \$36,000 per doctor, per year, promoting their products.

For more information: Health Coalition <http://bit.ly/RTOEROPharma>

Pharmacare would cut costs, allow for better monitoring of medications, lead to a healthier population, and reduce the burden on other treatments.

Questions

- 1 How could the provincial and federal levels of government work together to create a universal drug plan?
- 2 The federal government already provides prescription drugs to First Nations, veterans, the military, refugees and prisoners. How would you see the government's role evolving in implementing universal drug coverage for the remainder of Canadians?
- 3 What obstacles might hinder implementing a pharmacare system?



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