



CANADIAN
PHARMACISTS
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION DES
PHARMACIENS
DU CANADA

**CPhA PRE-BUDGET
CONSULTATION BRIEF
2020**

**Health care
in Canada
needs to see
a pharmacist.**

**RETHINK
PHARMACISTS**

CPhA Recommendations

1

Opportunities for Greener Community Care

That the federal government increase investments for community-based health care by supporting innovation, health care coordination and full scopes of practice for primary health care providers.



2

Greener Pharmacies

That the federal government provide \$250,000 in funding for a national “green pharmacy” education campaign to be led by CPhA with the aim of reducing carbon emissions and building more environmentally sustainable pharmacy practices.



3

The Safe Disposal of Unused Medications

That the federal government work with provinces and invest \$1M/year over 5 years to expand and promote pharmacy-led medication return programs (MPRs) for the safe disposal of unused medications.



Introduction

On behalf of the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) and Canada's 43,000 pharmacists, we are pleased to provide the Committee with our recommendations for Budget 2020 with a focus on building a more environmentally sustainable future for Canadians

All Canadians have a role to play in ensuring a sustainable future for our country and planet. The health care industry is no exception. While patient safety and health outcomes are the top priorities for frontline pharmacists, they are also mindful of the important role they play in contributing to a healthy environment for their patients and for future generations by reducing waste and leading environmentally-conscious practices.

CPhA has identified some areas where pharmacy can make a difference in support of healthier populations and environments. These actions will help to reduce our carbon footprint while also improving patient care and outcomes. In order to achieve success, however, we require strong leadership and support from federal and provincial governments. We thank you for the opportunity to provide our insights into this critical issue and we look forward to collaborating with governments, patients and health care providers to shape a better future.

Opportunities for Greener Community Care

Patients achieve better health outcomes at lower costs when they can access treatment in their own communities. This was acknowledged by federal, provincial and territorial governments in the Common Statement of Principles on Shared Health Priorities released in 2017 as a way to reduce reliance on more expensive hospital infrastructure. This takes on even greater importance in the face of the climate emergency, as it is estimated that Canadian hospitals account for 8% of public greenhouse gas emissions and 11% of total public energy consumption.

Investing in primary health care and community-based service delivery for preventive, chronic, palliative and end of life care will benefit both patients and the environment. Pharmacists are among the primary health care providers whose skills, expertise and accessibility could be better utilized to help keep patients out of hospitals for longer, saving governments money and reducing environmental impacts of hospital care.

For years, community pharmacists have been key providers of preventive health care. They help patients quit smoking through counseling and prescribed drug therapy and offer vaccination services to prevent travel and other preventable diseases such as the flu, shingles, meningitis and human papillomavirus. Pharmacists also screen patients for their risk of chronic disease such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease through blood pressure measurements, cholesterol and other testing. However, there is so much more that pharmacists could do to improve community care if they had the funding and resources to support such services.

Key areas in which pharmacists care could be expanded are home visits, minor/common ailments prescribing, opioid therapy management, medication reviews and adherence support, mental health screening, weight management and chronic disease management. Some of these could easily be supported through funding while others require regulation changes to enable pharmacists to practice to full scope. For example, pharmacists could be doing much more to help reverse the harms associated with the opioid crisis. As designated “practitioners” within the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, pharmacists could use this authority to prevent inappropriate prescribing and misuse of opioids. This authority would also allow pharmacists to better manage opioid dependency treatment options while increasing patient access to care in their community.

Community-based health care is not expanding fast enough. With an aging population, more and more Canadians are ending up in overcrowded and high carbon-emitting hospitals because the care they need is simply not available in their homes and communities. Through innovation, better coordination and ensuring that all health care providers are able to work to their full scopes of practice, community-based care can become a reality and positively impact our climate and environment.



RECOMMENDATION: That the federal government increase investments for community-based health care by supporting innovation, health care coordination and full scopes of practice for primary health care providers.

Greener Pharmacies

All industries in Canada are looking to do their part to transition to a low carbon economy, and pharmacy is no exception. From a continued reliance on faxed prescriptions to wasteful packaging, there are many ways community pharmacies can contribute to reduce their carbon footprint.

There are some great examples of pharmacies implementing greener practices. Maillon Vert, a consulting organization in Quebec, has been helping pharmacies in the province adopt more environmentally sustainable practices and provide eco-friendly care to patients. Specific measures pharmacies are taking to be more environmentally conscious include reducing packaging, avoiding stocking single-use products and selling biodegradable products and those that can be purchased in bulk, such as shampoo and laundry detergent. These pharmacies are also recycling and using more efficient heating and electric systems.

We applaud those pharmacies that have taken steps to reduce their carbon footprint. However, for many pharmacy owners across Canada dealing with recent cuts and demanding pharmacy operations, these changes can appear to be out of their reach. We propose that the federal government allocate \$250,000 in funding within the 2020 budget for a national “green pharmacy” education campaign to be led by CPhA. This funding would enable our organization to provide pharmacists across the country with the education, tools and mentorship to make necessary changes to pharmacy practice in order to achieve meaningful carbon reduction in the community pharmacy sector.



RECOMMENDATION: That the federal government provide \$250,000 in funding for a national “green pharmacy” education campaign to be led by CPhA with the aim of reducing carbon emissions and building more environmentally sustainable pharmacy practices.

The Safe Disposal of Unused Medications

The improper disposal of expired or unused medications can degrade our already struggling environmental system by contaminating water supplies or ecosystems that are used by nearby communities or wildlife.

Pharmacy-led medication return programs (MRPs) are important initiatives that benefit Canadians by preventing the diversion accidental ingestion of unused drugs. They also help prevent environmental pollution and impacts to wildlife from exposure to medications. MRPs further provide pharmacists with the opportunity to talk to patients to determine the causes of medication waste, thus enabling the identification and resolution of medication-related problems and, in particular, a chance to address factors contributing to nonadherence.

Four provincial jurisdictions have legislated mandatory return programs of unused pharmaceuticals: British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island. These programs are administered by the Health Products Stewardship Association (HPSA) and funded by the health products industry. Alberta and Nova Scotia have programs in place coordinated by pharmacist associations, however participation is not provincially mandated. New Brunswick and Saskatchewan have no formal return programs in place, which means that pharmacist must incur any costs of disposing of unused medication and uptake may be quite low.

We recommend that the federal government engage with provinces to mandate medication return programs across the country and work with organizations such as the Health Products Stewardship Association (HPSA) to ensure that all Canadian pharmacies can participate in such programs at no cost. We also recommend that the government support a public awareness campaign about pharmacy-led medication return programs and the importance of proper medication disposal for the health and safety of Canadians as well as for our environment.



RECOMMENDATION: That the federal government work with provinces and invest \$1M/year over 5 years to expand and promote pharmacy-led medication return programs (MPRs) for the safe disposal of unused medications.

About CPhA

The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) is the uniting national voice of pharmacy and the pharmacist profession in Canada. As pharmacists undertake an enhanced role in the delivery of health care services, CPhA ensures that the profession is recognized as a national leader in health care, influencing the policies, programs, budgets and initiatives affecting the profession and the health of Canadians.

More information is available at www.pharmacists.ca.