



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-02187**

BY: **MR. GERRETSEN (KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS)**

DATE: **MARCH 21, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **MR. BILL BLAIR**

Response by the Minister of Health

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Health Care Services

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

AS PART OF BUDGET 2018, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF AN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PHARMACARE. THE COUNCIL WILL BEGIN A NATIONAL DIALOGUE AND WORK CLOSELY WITH PROVINCIAL, TERRITORIAL, INDIGENOUS, AND NATIONAL LEADERS, AS WELL AS WITH RELEVANT EXPERTS, TO RECOMMEND ACTIONS ON HOW BEST TO MOVE FORWARD ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE. THE COUNCIL WILL REPORT TO THE MINISTERS OF HEALTH AND FINANCE BY SPRING 2019. THIS WORK WILL COMPLEMENT THE STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH ON THE "DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL PHARMACARE PROGRAM AS AN INSURED SERVICE FOR CANADIANS UNDER THE CANADA HEALTH ACT."

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING CANADA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND TO SUPPORTING THE HEALTH OF CANADIANS. THIS INCLUDES WORKING WITH THE PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES TO IMPROVE THE AFFORDABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND APPROPRIATE USE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ARE A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN CANADA. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSESSING THE SAFETY, EFFICACY AND QUALITY OF DRUGS BEFORE AUTHORIZING THEM FOR SALE IN CANADA. IT ALSO REGULATES THE PRICES OF PATENTED DRUGS IN CANADA THROUGH THE PATENTED MEDICINE PRICES REVIEW BOARD TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE NOT

EXCESSIVE. PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH CARE FOR THEIR RESIDENTS, INCLUDING DETERMINING WHICH DRUGS ARE REIMBURSED AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS. IT IS WITHIN THIS CONTEXT THAT CANADA'S GOVERNMENTS ARE WORKING, TOGETHER AND IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES, TO PROVIDE CANADIANS WITH AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO THE PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS THEY NEED.

IN 2016, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT JOINED THE PAN-CANADIAN PHARMACEUTICAL ALLIANCE, A DRUG PRICE NEGOTIATION BODY ESTABLISHED BY PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS IN 2010. THE PAN-CANADIAN PHARMACEUTICAL ALLIANCE COMBINES GOVERNMENTS' PURCHASING POWER TO ACHIEVE GREATER SAVINGS FOR ALL PUBLICLY-FUNDED DRUG PROGRAMS AND CANADIANS. THE MOST RECENT DATA SHOW THAT, AS OF MARCH 2017, THE COMBINED SAVINGS RESULTING FROM THE WORK OF THE ALLIANCE HAD REACHED ALMOST \$1.3 BILLION ANNUALLY.

IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS TAKING DIRECT ACTION TO MODERNIZE THE WAY THE PATENTED MEDICINE PRICES REVIEW BOARD WORKS, TO BETTER PROTECT CANADIAN CONSUMERS FROM EXCESSIVE PRICES. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN 20 YEARS, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL UPDATE THE *PATENTED MEDICINES REGULATIONS*, PROVIDING THE BOARD WITH THE TOOLS IT NEEDS TO ASSESS DRUG PRICES.