



CFMS
Canadian Federation
of Medical Students

FEMC
Fédération des étudiants et des
étudiantes en médecine du Canada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CFMS Response to the Federal Health Committee Report which supports a National Pharmacare Plan

OTTAWA, April 28, 2018 – After two years of consultations, the federal Standing Committee on Health (HESA) released its pharmacare report on Wednesday, April 18, 2018, titled “Pharmacare Now: Prescription Medicine Coverage for All Canadians.” The Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS), represented by then VP Government Affairs Jessica Harris in 2016, was among many stakeholders who appeared before the committee in support of a national pharmacare strategy.

The CFMS welcomes HESA’s support of a universal single-payer public prescription drug coverage program. The report set 18 recommendations to guide the federal government’s approach to pharmacare with four key priorities: (1) expanding prescription drug coverage outside of hospitals; (2) developing a national drug formulary; (3) improving the process for drug pricing and reimbursement; and (4) building better data systems for drug management, research, and adverse reaction reporting. These recommendations align with the principles and guidelines that the CFMS has brought forth to the federal government. Particularly, the CFMS is pleased to see the emphasis on building a pharmacare plan in collaboration with stakeholders and communities across the country. The Supplementary Report of the New Democratic Party of Canada highlights the need for an evidence-based national formulary, another priority endorsed by the CFMS.

Recent initiatives, such as the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, have been developed to enhance bulk purchasing of medication as a reduced cost. However, both the CFMS and HESA note that the effort does not benefit the 70% of Canadians who obtain drug coverage through private insurance. A public, nationwide approach must be employed to meet these gaps and truly reform Canada’s patchwork of programs.

While encouraged by this progress, the CFMS is concerned that no specific timeline for these recommendations were discussed in the report. In the 2018 Budget, the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare was created. No budget was allocated and it is unclear if tangible action will result from this committee. This Advisory

Council is predicted to provide its report in 2019, ensuring that pharmacare will be a key issue in the 2019 federal election. The CFMS has dedicated two past “Lobby Days” (now called Day of Action) on this issue, and will continue to contribute to the dialogue towards a truly national and universal pharmacare plan.

The CFMS urges the federal government to commit to action and to follow the recommendations of this HESA report. Given that the Standing Committee on Health members acknowledge that our current fragmented coverage limits access to medication for one in ten Canadians, there is an urgent need for the development of a concrete plan and corresponding timeline towards a national pharmacare program.

Read more about the CFMS Pharmacare Asks [here](#)

CFMS Position Papers on Pharmacare include:

- [Preserving Medicine and Optimizing the Canadian Health Care System \(September 2015\)](#)
- [Pharmacare: Promotion Equitable Access to Medications \(April 2015\)](#)

QUOTATIONS FROM THE CFMS:

“The CFMS has long advocated for a national universal pharmacare system that would ensure that all Canadians have access to prescribed medications regardless of their ability to pay. We welcome the HESA report and look forward to the realization of a Universal Pharmacare system for all Canadians.”

- Henry Annan, CFMS President

“We are excited that high-level and productive discussions are happening around a national pharmacare plan in Canada. That said, actions will speak more than words, and Canadians deserve concrete action for the health of all.”

- Yipeng Ge, CFMS VP Government Affairs

ABOUT THE CFMS:

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) is the national organization representing over 8,000 medical students at 15 medical schools across Canada. Tomorrow's physicians leading for health today.

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