



August 9, 2023

The Hon. Mark Holland
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Holland

We are writing to you today to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of Health on behalf of the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA). As the national organization representing Canada's over 44,000 pharmacists from coast to coast to coast, we look forward to building on the strong relationship we had with Minister Duclos, as well as his staff and department officials.

Pharmacists in Canada have some of the most advanced scope of practice in the world. They were instrumental in caring for Canadians during the pandemic, and governments are increasingly relying on them to provide a range of primary care services to people in their communities. Unfortunately, despite this progress, many pharmacists who come out of school still cannot practice to their full scope, and depending on where they live, many Canadians cannot access the same services. As Minister of Health, we hope you will help champion the role of pharmacists across all areas of the health care system.

Your appointment as Minister of Health comes at a critical time for Canadians. Our health human resources crisis, ongoing and pronounced drug shortages, and pending pharmacare legislation are all issues that have a significant impact on pharmacy practice and on the patients we serve.

Like physicians and nurses, Canada's pharmacy workforce is also facing a recruitment and retention problem. As the population ages and more care is provided in community settings, we must invest in pharmacy-based care and the professionals that are underpinning it. This includes:

- Helping reduce administrative burden so that pharmacists can spend time on providing direct patient care
- Encouraging pharmacists to work in rural and remote communities through the expansion of student loan forgiveness program
- Supporting pharmacy schools to encourage enrollment
- Including pharmacists in immigration initiatives and supporting employers who provide experiential placements for international pharmacy graduates



Pharmacists in Canada spend approximately 20% of their time managing drug shortages and recalls. Ensuring a stable drug supply for patients must remain a top priority for the federal government and we look forward to working with you and Health Canada officials to implement solutions that will help prevent future shortages and help mitigate those that occur. These include:

- Putting in place strategies that will encourage manufactures to bring products to the Canadian market
- Creating a list of medications at high-risk of a shortage and enhancing data collection to monitor potential shortages
- Working with your provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure pharmacists have the tools and authorities necessary to effectively manage drug shortages
- Ensuring that patients do not have to pay more for their medications when there is a shortage

Changes in drug coverage can have a significant impact on patients and on pharmacy teams. Pharmacare should also go beyond simple drug coverage but also include the stable supply of drugs and the care that is provided by pharmacists and pharmacy professionals. As you work towards new pharmacare legislations, we believe that universal coverage can be achieved through a mixed payer program that prioritizes coverage for those who are not insured and addresses high costs deductibles and co-pays that create financial barriers for patients. Pharmacists manage coverage for patients on a daily basis and can provide practical insights on how a pharmacare program can be implemented. We hope that you will lean on our expertise in the coming months as you consult with provinces, territories and First Nations groups.

We look forward to working with you and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss our shared priorities for Canadians.

Yours sincerely

Glen Doucet
Chief Executive Officer

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Chair