



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

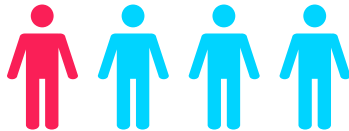
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada



2025 FEDERAL PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

Strengthening Canada's Drug Shortage Response

In late 2022, Canada faced a crisis that shook families across the country. Store shelves sat empty as parents searched desperately for children's Tylenol, Advil, and other basic fever relief medications. As the flu, RSV, and COVID surged simultaneously, parents were forced to ration doses, drive hours to other pharmacies, or try to split adult tablets just to bring their child's fever down. For many, this shortage turned an ordinary cold into a moment of panic and helplessness.



This wasn't a one-time event.

Today, **1 in 4 Canadians** say they or someone they know has been affected by a drug shortage.

These shortages aren't just inconvenient. They disrupt treatment plans, increase stress and anxiety, and in some cases, put people's health at risk. In a country like Canada, access to essential medicine should never be uncertain.

Pharmacists: Canada's First Line of Defence

When shortages happen, pharmacists are the ones patients turn to first. They spend up to 20% of their time addressing shortages by locating alternative suppliers, identifying safe substitutions, and helping patients adjust to unexpected changes in their medications.

This work pulls them away from their primary role: providing direct care. With ongoing staffing challenges and rising demand, drug shortages place yet another strain on both pharmacists and the broader health system.

Why Federal Support is Urgently Needed

Global instability, frequent manufacturing delays, and increasing demand have made drug shortages more frequent and more complex. Future risks of U.S. pharmaceutical tariffs could further destabilize Canada's fragile supply chain.

How CPhA Supports the Health System

As the national voice of over 47,000 pharmacists, the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) plays a vital role in helping health-care professionals respond effectively to drug shortages:

- **Timely Clinical Guidance:** In just the past 24 months, we've developed more than **16 bilingual clinical guidance documents** to support front-line providers during drug shortages. Our shortage information webpages – which include regular supply updates, FAQs, and clinical guidance– have collectively been viewed nearly 150,000 times, underscoring the value of our work in navigating complex supply challenges.

**WE CANNOT
WAIT FOR THE
NEXT CRISIS.**

Action is needed
now to protect
Canadians' access
to medication.



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[Visit Drug Shortages Information Page](#)

- **Alternative Drug Resources:** For high-risk shortages, CPhA creates alternative drug tables which allow pharmacists to mitigate the shortage. CPhA disseminates this information to pharmacists in real time, allowing them to identify drug alternatives and continue delivering quality patient care.
- **Rapid Information Sharing:** Pharmacists are often the last to be informed of a shortage. CPhA helps close this gap by providing timely updates, clinical advice, and clear communication materials. We also engage with national and local media to explain shortages to the public, reduce panic buying and stockpiling, and provide practical guidance on what patients can do.
- **Coordinated Response:** CPhA works closely with Health Canada, provincial bodies, and pharmacists across the country to track shortages and develop solutions. We conduct rapid surveys of pharmacists to capture supply and demand at the pharmacy level, providing critical insights to manufacturers and other stakeholders. This up-to-the-minute intelligence ensures responses are grounded in what is happening in pharmacies across Canada and helps stakeholders act quickly and effectively.

During an acute shortage, several CPhA staff can spend up to **70% of their time on the response**, including answering urgent inquiries, developing guidance, and fielding up to 3 hours per day of media requests to help inform both the profession and the public.



Recent examples of [media coverage](#) include the prescription painkiller shortage of [acetaminophen](#) with codeine or oxycodone in July 2025.

Recommendation: Provide Funding to Support CPhA's Work on Drug Shortages

CPhA is requesting **\$275,000 per year for three years** to expand our capacity to respond to drug shortages. This investment would enable us to:

- Develop and update bilingual clinical guidance for pharmacists and prescribers
- Strengthen internal pharmacist expertise to advise on shortage responses
- Provide government with rapid, pharmacy-level intelligence and communication support, helping officials understand emerging issues, respond effectively, and keep the public informed to prevent panic buying and stockpiling

Drug shortages are no longer rare occurrences. They are a growing threat to patient care across Canada. Pharmacists are on the front lines of managing these challenges, but they cannot do it alone. The Federal Government depends on CPhA to supply accurate, timely information from the pharmacy counter to the policy table. With targeted federal support, CPhA can ensure decision-makers have the insights they need to act quickly, maintain public confidence, and protect Canadians' access to medicines.

We appreciate the opportunity to share these recommendations in advance of Budget 2025 and look forward to working together to protect the health of Canadians.

