



CANADIAN
PHARMACISTS
ASSOCIATION

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PHARMACIENS
DU CANADA

August 8, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister

Over the last two weeks, Canadians along with pharmacists have been alarmed by the growing interest from our American counterparts to import medications from Canada into the US and the impact that this could have on Canada's drug supply. While we sympathize with American patients who are seeking affordable access to medications, we do not believe that this is a practical or sustainable solution to addressing their domestic concerns.

While we are very encouraged that the federal government is meeting with stakeholders next week to develop a plan to address the US proposal, the focus and attention on the recent US announcement has also put a much-needed spotlight on an issue that is deeply concerning to Canadians.

Drug shortages in Canada are not a new phenomenon but pharmacists are reporting significant increases in the last 3-5 years. In some cases, pharmacists have indicated that up to 50% of their weekly order was not able to be filled. This trend has also been confirmed by patients with one in four Canadians saying that they have experienced a shortage, either personally or a family/friend.

Given the nature of the global supply chain and the challenges that health care providers experience on the front lines, we would urge the government to commit to a clear drug shortage action plan that would include:

1. Research on the underlying causes of shortages in Canada and globally
2. A leadership role for the Government of Canada to convene a global taskforce on drug shortage and the security of our supply chain
3. Resources and tools to support front-line health care providers to mitigate shortages and recalls when they occur

In addition, as the government contemplates its next steps in drug policy, whether it be pharmacare, the creation of a drug agency, or changes to regulating drug pricing in Canada, we would urge you to consider the interconnection between various policies and how they can impact access to life-saving medications in Canada. It would be prudent to fully understand the potential impacts on access to medications of such structural changes before adopting such changes.

Pharmacists have the clinical expertise in pharmacology and medication management. Pharmacists are also great resources that can be utilized to develop strong comprehensive drug policy. As the national association representing the profession, we will continue to provide our feedback on proposed policies and legislation, and we can also assist the government in identifying potential experts and resources that can provide that advice.



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We look forward to meeting with Minister Petitpas Taylor on August 12 regarding the issue of US drug importation and further discussions on how we can ensure safe and stable access of medications to Canadians.

Yours sincerely

Glen Doucet
Chief Executive Officer

cc The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health
The Honorable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development