



## Memo to Council

### From the Office of Councillor Amy Lubik

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Date: August 24, 2020

Subject: Support for National Pharmacare program call to action

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In August, the Municipality of Comox sent a letter to Port Moody and other municipalities for support of Implementation of a National Pharmacare strategy (Attachment 1 and Attachment 2).

This is because:

With the economy in crisis because of COVID-19, now is the time for the federal government to fulfill its promise to implement a universal, public national pharmacare program. The need for pharmacare has never been greater.

Rapid implementation of a universal pharmacare system could help Canadian households, businesses, and municipalities and avoid needless suffering.

Prior to COVID-19, Canada's patchwork of private and public drug plans left [1 in 5 Canadians with little or no prescription drug coverage](#). Canadians were already three times more likely to [skip prescriptions because they could not afford them](#) than residents of comparable countries with universal pharmacare systems, like the United Kingdom. COVID-19 will make this worse.

[Over 3 million Canadians have lost their jobs](#) because of the COVID-19 pandemic and 2.5 million more are working less than half of their usual hours. All 5.5 million of these Canadians now have less income to pay for medicines that they or their family members need. Those who were fortunate enough to have had work-related health insurance may lose that too.

Even before COVID-19, [thousands of Canadians already ended up in hospital](#) and [hundreds of Canadians died](#) every year as a result of their inability to afford the medicines they need. More will do so as a result of their reduced incomes and loss of drug coverage – right at a time when we need Canadians to avoid hospitals as much as possible.

In addition to the needs outlined in the attached letter, National Single Payer Pharmacare would save municipalities millions collectively, and even a community as small as Port Moody over 100, 000, which could be employed to promote and preserve the health our residents. This is highly overdue.

Supporting this call is entirely aligned with Port Moody's goals of a healthy community and previous support of Calls for National Pharmacare on January 14, 2020:

WHEREAS the City of Port Moody has recognized and has demonstrated over the past years its commitment to the importance of healthy citizens as the foundation of a healthy, engaged, and economically vibrant community;

AND WHEREAS the over 3 million Canadians, including many in our local communities, don't take medicines prescribed by their doctors because they can't afford them;

AND WHEREAS Canada is currently the ONLY country with a National Medicare Program that does not have a National Pharmacare Program;

AND WHEREAS the risk of having no insurance for medicines is high among lower income Canadians which includes the service industry, precarious working, and seasonal workers;

AND WHEREAS studies show that adding a National Pharmacare Program to our National Health Care System would lower costs to businesses by over \$8 billion per year, providing Canadian companies competitive advantages in international trade;

AND WHEREAS recent research confirms that these gains can be achieved with little or no increase in public investment;

AND WHEREAS municipal government expenses for employee benefits would be significantly reduced by a National Pharmacare Program;

AND WHEREAS a national prescription drug formulary would support better quality prescribing, including reducing dangerous and inappropriate prescribing to Canadian seniors;

AND WHEREAS a National Pharmacare plan is a sound policy, both economically and socially, the City of Port Moody express its support for the creation of a National Pharmacare program as an extension of Canadian Medicare, since health and economic studies now show that such a policy would improve health in municipalities, give local businesses a competitive advantage in the global marketplace, and lower costs for municipal government on taxpayers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Port Moody call on the Federal Government to work with the provinces and territories to develop and implement a Universal Public National Pharmacare program as one of the first orders of business after the 2019 election;

AND THAT this letter be forwarded to all BC municipalities asking to write their support as well.

**Suggested Recommendation:**

WHEREAS more people are susceptible to lack of pharmacare than before the COVID-19 pandemic;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Port Moody send a letter to the Federal Government, including the Minister of Health and leaders of the oppositional parties, urging them to develop and implement a Universal Public National Pharmacare program as soon as possible.

**Attachments:**

1. Sample Message on Pharmacare Implementation
2. Letter from Stephanie McGowan regarding National Pharmacare Call to Action