

Media Release

Universal Catastrophic Drug Coverage: a necessity for Canadians

Canadians need access to life-saving prescription medications

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For Immediate Release

TORONTO – All Canadians deserve equal access to necessary medications. “Presently, in Canada there is a patchwork quilt of coverage, differing from province to province, the territories, federally and for both private and public coverage.” said Louise Binder, Chair, Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC). “The differences include populations covered, conditions for coverage, as well as the medications covered.” These disparities leave some people with no coverage, so they either go into debt or to do without required medications. A universal Catastrophic Drug Coverage program for Canadians will act as a safety net to protect and ensure that all Canadians needing medications will receive them.” said Richard Baker, Vice-Chair, CTAC.

While many HIV and HIV/Hepatitis co-infected people have coverage for these drugs, it is not true across Canada. In addition, people in these populations require other medications to deal with co-morbidities, drug side effects and toxicities and premature aging.

On World AIDS Day, CTAC calls on all levels of government and other health care stakeholders to come together to reach an agreement to implement a Universal Catastrophic Drug program as recommended by the 2002 Romanow Commission¹ and the 2006 Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministerial Task Force on the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy².

2010 is coming to an end and no action has been taken by Canadian governments to realize this commitment. We urge the Health Ministers to add this to the agenda of their next meeting set for December 2010.

CTAC, in partnership with other consumer and patient organizations is preparing a detailed plan for Universal Catastrophic Drug coverage for consideration by governments and other health care stakeholders to make sure the program is driven by patient communities and reflects the needs of Canadians from across the country. It will be made public shortly.

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Resources

1. Final Report, Romanow Commission: <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/CP32-85-2002E.pdf> (see chapter 9)
2. Progress Report, federal/provincial/territorial Ministerial Task Force on the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/pharma/2006-nps-snpp/index-eng.php> (see page 29)