



In response to the introduction of legislation today with respect to drug coverage for Canadians, the Smart Health Benefits Coalition issued the following statement:

“The Smart Health Benefits Coalition is made up of on-the-ground experts across Canada, working every day to support 10 million Canadians and their families with comprehensive health and drug benefit plans through 65,000 employers, and 4,500 union plans.

The Smart Health Benefits Coalition is committed to ensuring access to affordable healthcare for all Canadians. We support efforts to fill the gaps in coverage that currently exist for Canadians who do not have access to an employer drug plan or provincial drug plan, or who are struggling with affordability. Data shows that while 97% of Canadians have coverage under an employer or provincial drug plan, some surveys indicate 22% of respondents said they experienced difficulties paying for medication.

Considering that nearly 4 out of 5 Canadians have quality drug coverage, today’s *Pharmacare Act*, as proposed, is disappointing. The Smart Health Benefits Coalition believes that action to meet the challenges of access and affordability for those Canadians without adequate and affordable coverage would be faster, more impactful and a lower cost if the government prioritized filling gaps in coverage and helping uninsured or underinsured Canadians with their out-of-pocket expenses.

Why should the federal government spend 4 out of 5 of its taxpayer dollars replacing drugs already paid for by Canadian employers and provinces, when access to primary, hospital, rare disease and high-cost drugs is under so much pressure?

While we recognize that affordable access to contraception and diabetes medications are incredibly important to Canadians’ health and our healthcare system overall, the Smart Health Benefits Coalition believes government should prioritize fiscal resources into more robust coverage for those who are uninsured or who have gaps in their coverage.

As experts in supporting millions of Canadians and their families with their drug insurance plans, the Smart Health Benefits Coalition is ready to work with all stakeholders on how best to leverage limited resources and existing strengths to get coverage to those who need it. We believe that is the smartest way forward.

The Smart Health Benefits Coalition will be active and engaged throughout the legislative process on Bill C-64, offering clear and compelling perspectives and policy options that support our shared objectives of getting help to those who need it as quickly as possible.”

About the Smart Health Benefits Coalition (SHBC): Formed in 2023, the SHBC is a collective force dedicated to transforming healthcare in Canada. As a necessary stakeholder at the table on pharmacare, it is committed to constructive dialogue that will shape efficient solutions for all Canadians. For more information, visit www.smarthealthbenefits.ca

Interviews:

To request an interview with Carlyne Eagan, Principal Spokesperson of the Smart Health Benefits Coalition, please contact:

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