



Council Member Motion

For the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting of August 20, 2015

Date: August 6, 2015

From: Councillor Ben Isitt and Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Subject: National Pharmacare Program

Motion:

WHEREAS the City of Victoria has recognized and demonstrated its commitment to the importance of healthy citizens as the foundation of a healthy, engaged and economically vibrant community;

AND WHEREAS over 3 million Canadians, including many in our local communities, do not take medicines prescribed by doctors because they cannot afford to purchase 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 particularly high among lower income Canadians, including many workers in the City of Victoria with precarious and seasonal employment;

AND WHEREAS research suggests that adding a national pharmacare program to our national health care system would lower costs to businesses by as much as \$8 billion per year, with a corresponding competitive advantage for Canadian companies;

AND WHEREAS the creation of a national pharmacare program could produce substantial cost savings for local government expenditures on employee benefits;

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 sound policy, both economically and socially.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Victoria places itself on record supporting the creation of a National Pharmacare program as an extension of Canadian Medicare, to improve the health outcomes of local residents, ensure fairness in access to medicine, and provide for greater efficiency and effectiveness in Canada's health care system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Victoria calls on the Government of British Columbia to work with other Provinces and the Federal Government to develop and implement a National Pharmacare program;

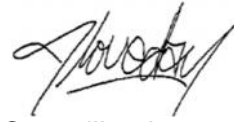
AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Council requests that the Mayor convey this decision to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Health, the Premier of British Columbia, the provincial Minister of Health, and members of the legislative assembly and members of parliament representing districts within the City of Victoria;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Victoria submits this resolution for consideration at the 2016 conventions of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Ben Isitt



Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Attachments:

Letter from Canadian Doctors for Medicare



Mission

To provide a voice for Canadian doctors who want to strengthen and improve Canada's universal, publicly-funded health care system. We advocate for innovations in treatment and prevention services that are evidence-based and improve access, quality, equity, and sustainability.

Dear Victoria City Council

CDM is currently engaged in policy and advocacy work on universal public coverage of prescription medications, also known as pharmacare. Along with allies across the country, CDM is working towards making national pharmacare an election issue. We are asking municipal councils across the country, including Victoria City Council to join CDM in supporting the call for national pharmacare.

Drug access in Canada has become increasingly difficult for doctors and patients as Canadians rely on private insurance or pay out-of-pocket for their medicines. This patchwork system is expensive and has left many Canadians with little or no coverage. Currently, 3 million Canadians do not fill their prescriptions because they cannot afford their medications.

Canada is the only developed country in the world with a universal public health care system that does not include coverage of prescription medications. We pay the second highest cost for medications in the world after the United States. A recent study in the Canadian Medical Association Journal has shown that a universal public drug plan is economically feasible and taxpayers could save \$7.3 billion per year.

We believe that municipal governments have a critical role to play in the fight for national pharmacare. Local governments currently spend as much as \$500 million per year of municipal budgets on private insurance coverage for their employees. cities could upload their prescription drug costs to provincial and federal governments and considerable savings could be realized.

Mobilizing support from municipalities is an important way to demonstrate the support for pharmacare that is growing from coast to coast. Pro-pharmacare motions have been passed in many cities across the country including Vancouver, B.C., Cambridge, ON., Marathon, ON., Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, Inverness County, N.S., and Victoria County, N.S. We believe that this articulation of support for pharmacare will help demonstrate to federal parties the support and need for publicly administered, national drug coverage.

CDM requests Victory City Council, to join us in this nationwide push to improve our health care system by presenting and passing a motion to support national pharmacare plan which is public, affordable and safe. Together, we can build a health care system that is more accessible, equitable, and sustainable.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Dutt'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Monika Dutt

Chair, Canadian Doctors for Medicare