

Should Canada adopt Eric Hoskins' pharmacare plan?

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In Canada today, there is what is known as a 'patchwork' system for dealing with prescription medicines and their costs. The term 'patchwork' is used here to represent a system which is covered differently within each province, also known as a multi-payer system for medicine. I believe that Canada should adopt a single-payer pharmacare program as suggested by Eric Hoskins as it reduces the cost of prescriptions, fills the gaps in accessibility to medications, and improves the health of Canadians as a whole.

I agree with the plan which Hoskins has set forth to implement a single-payer health care system over the current multi-payer system as it generally reduces the cost of prescription medications, not only for the country but for all people. Today, the cost of pharmaceutical drugs in Canada are some of the highest in the world (Vogel, 2019a). This can easily be changed through the implementation of a single-payer system. Rather than outsourcing the purchasing of pharmaceuticals to each province in Canada, the single-payer system allows for the purchase of pharmaceuticals in bulk for all of Canada to minimize overall cost. Under the pharmacare plan, it is projected to reduce the cost of prescriptions to as little as \$2 per prescription (Vogel, 2019b). Through buying in bulk through a single-payer system, healthcare in Canada will become more affordable for the country as a whole.

There is also a large gap in accessibility within the current healthcare system as multi-payer systems rely not only on provincial but also insurance systems. This system allows for many Canadians to simply fall through the cracks and get left behind. It has even been found that "the "patchwork" system of private and public drug coverage in Canada leaves approximately one in five Canadians reporting that they have no coverage for their

prescriptions.” (Brandt, Shearer, & Morgan, 2018) Many employers also try to cut costs by limiting their insurance funding to certain employee classes which leaves many people uninsured (Flood, Thomas, Moten, & Fafard, 2018, p. 29). While, the single-payer system cuts costs for all and allows for universal pharmacare, which is much more affordable and accessible to all. I believe that necessary pharmaceuticals should be accessible to everyone without relation to income or insurance status.

The universality of the pharmacare plan allows Canadians to be healthier as a whole. When pharmaceuticals are accessible and affordable, it allows for a healthier population as there are less limitations on the ability to receive needed treatments. Limitations can cause many issues in the health of the population, some even “leading patients to not take prescription drugs, and to use more health care services than they would have otherwise” (Law et al., 2018). Through providing Canadians with access to the medications they need, it prevents further medical care costs which saves the country more money as a whole. This pharmacare plan is an investment for the health of the country which will pay off in the end through preventative care.

As I examine this issue of a universal pharmacare plan, I can more deeply understand the more liberal views of my position on this issue. This position definitely values social issues to the same degree as economic issues, which leads me to believe that this viewpoint is more liberal and falls within my own political ideology. Liberal ideologies usually favour publicly funding services aimed towards social welfare, such as this pharmacare plan. The ideals held in this ideology typically value government funding for necessities, such as health care or education. This issue and my opinion on it falls more on the left side of the political spectrum, as it values

an economic focus on community. This side of the argument falls within my own political ideology and represents many values which I believe in.

When looking at the opposing side of the argument, it argues that pharmacare in Canada does not need any radical change. This opinion favours the fact that Canada should remain on a multi-payer system, just with more added services for those who do fall through the cracks. This argument seems to be based on a more traditional and capitalistic approach to pharmacare. Speer argues that the majority of Canadians have insurance which they are satisfied with and that radical change would pose more harm than good in this instance (Speer, 2019). This viewpoint is a more conservative view on the issue as it shows an ideal for keeping past tradition in society. I disagree with this viewpoint as I believe that our pharmacare system in Canada needs radical change as a way of ensuring good healthcare for all Canadians.

I believe that it is also important to note that opinions on this issue are usually influenced by other factors as well. These may include issues such as level of income, disability, or illness. Many people in higher income classes usually will side with a more conservative viewpoint as they see this pharmacare plan as excessive and not useful to them. While others who have struggled financially, with disability, or illness can see the benefits to which a universal pharmacare plan can provide life-changing assistance to Canadians. Opinions on this issues are usually contextual and rely on many outside factors, which is always important to note with social issues in contemporary society.

I agree with the idea of a universal pharmacare plan as presented by Eric Hoskins due to my political ideology, and all the benefits which can be seen by implementing these changes. Due to the fact that this pharmacare plan will lower costs, allow more accessibility to medicine,

and overall improve the lives of Canadians, it is only just to support this plan for the wellbeing of all of Canada. Therefore, I fully believe that Canada's pharmacare system needs radical change towards a universal pharmacare plan for all.

## References

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