



October 1, 2024

Sent via email

To: Honourable Senators, Parliament of Canada

**Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A4**

Subject: Urgent Passage of Bill C-64, *An Act respecting pharmacare*

Dear Honourable Senators:

I am writing on a matter of urgent importance. On behalf of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) and our over 425,000 members across Canada, I urge you to move forward with the timely passage of Bill C-64, *An Act respecting pharmacare*.

NUPGE believes passage without amendments and without delay is in the best interest of Canadians. As you are aware, Canada is the only country with universal health care that does not have pharmacare. Given the timelines before the next federal election, any delay in passing this critical piece of legislation is effectively dooming the bill and the long-awaited promise of a national pharmacare program in Canada.

For decades, public health advocates, experts, and commissions have unequivocally called for a national pharmacare program. From the Hall Commission at the inception of public health care in Canada, to the Romanow Commission and the more recent National Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, the evidence and recommendations have been clear: a universal, single-payer, pharmacare program is essential for our public healthcare system and for the health and well-being of Canadians. Pharmacare would also save the Canadian health care system billions of dollars through better coordination of prescribing and negotiating drug costs. Bill C-64 represents a crucial step in making this vision a reality.



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This gap in our public healthcare framework has left millions of Canadians struggling to afford their medications, with many choosing between essential medicines and necessities. Polling consistently puts between two-thirds and three-quarters of Canadians supporting pharmacare, across all political parties. Our members, who work across health and social services, see firsthand the consequences of our current fragmented and inequitable approach to prescription drug coverage.

Senator, passage of Bill C-64 reflects a consensus that has been built over years of research, consultation, and advocacy. However, this bill has already been subjected to extensive debate, analysis, and consultation. It has received widespread support from healthcare professionals, labour organizations, patient advocacy groups, and the broader public.

We further ask you to reflect on the recent letter from Federal Health Minister Holland to the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, Senator Omidvar, clarifying the legislation to deal with some of the outstanding concerns which may have been presented for your consideration.

Senator, we urge the Senate to expedite the passage of Bill C-64, without amendments and without delay, so that Canadians can finally have access to the prescription drug coverage they need. While observations to the bill will be welcomed, delays or amendments at this stage risk further jeopardizing the future of pharmacare, and that is simply unacceptable.

We stand with millions of Canadians who demand and deserve a national pharmacare program and we ask you to stand with us. The time to act is now. Please do not let this historic opportunity slip away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bert Blundon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Bert Blundon
President

cc: Jason MacLean, Secretary-Treasurer
National Executive Board