

Update on pharmaceutical programs

In an effort to keep you informed about our latest in Pharmaceutical news and developments, we have three updates to share. The first is regarding Generic Drug Reform legislative changes that became effective April 1, 2013. Second, the Government of Alberta plans to introduce a PharmaCare program effective January 1, 2014, and third, the Alberta government has reinstated Prescription Drug Allowances for Pharmacies as of April 15, 2013.

Generic Drug Reform legislative changes effective April 1, 2013

On April 1, 2013, the following provinces reduced the price of the top six generic drugs to 18% of the brand named drugs. Details are outlined below.

Provinces impacted and implementation dates:

Province	Effective Date
British Columbia (BC)	April 1, 2013
Alberta (AB)	April 1, 2013
Saskatchewan (SK)	April 1, 2013
Manitoba (MB)	April 1, 2013
Ontario (ON)	April 1, 2013
Nova Scotia (NS)	April 1, 2013
New Brunswick (NB)	April 1, 2013
Prince Edward Island (PEI)	April 1, 2013
Newfoundland (NL)	April 1, 2013
Yukon (YT)	April 1, 2013
Northwest Territories (NT)	April 1, 2013
Nunavut (NU)	April 1, 2013

This announcement applies to all provinces except Quebec. Sun Life continues to monitor government announcements from Quebec.

Which drugs do these changes affect?

The six generic drugs to be priced at 18% of brand are:

- Atorvastatin (generic version of Lipitor) – used to treat high cholesterol
- Ramipril (generic version of Altace) – used to treat blood pressure and other cardiovascular conditions
- Venlafaxine (generic version of Effexor) – used to treat depression and other mental health conditions
- Amlodipine (generic version of Norvasc) – used to treat high blood pressure and angina
- Omeprazole (generic version of Prilosec) – used to treat a variety of gastrointestinal conditions

- Rabeprazole (generic version of Pariet) – used to treat a variety of gastrointestinal conditions

These six drugs account for approximately 20% of all public spending on prescription drugs. Before this legislative change, provinces were paying between 25% – 40% of the brand name prices for these generics.

Govt. of Alberta To Introduce PharmaCare Program January 1, 2014

The Government of Alberta has started plans to implement a PharmaCare program as of January 1, 2014 to ensure comprehensive drug and supplementary health benefit coverage for all Alberta residents. Currently 20% of the residents have no coverage.

The government plans to:

- Implement a long-term plan to promote wellness and disease prevention, including Wellness Alberta
- Promote a strong foundation for public health including strategies to reduce mental illness and addictions and to ensure healthy weight for children and youth.
- Expand access to pharmacists as front-line health care professionals for medication, chronic disease assessment and management support to improve health outcomes and sustainability in the health care system
- Support cost-free access to insulin pumps for eligible members with Type 1 diabetes
- Develop an online tool to provide residents with key information on continuing care facilities in Alberta, such as wait time, available services and accommodation fees
- Help pharmacists adopt lower generic drug prices that will save Albertans money and give people who can't afford it better access to much-needed medication.

Sun Life is working in close collaboration with the CLHIA (Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Inc.) in offering industry guidance to Alberta as they design and implement the new PharmaCare program.

Govt. of Alberta Reinstates Prescription Drug Allowance for Pharmacies as of April 15, 2013

As of April 15, 2013 the government reinstated for one year a \$1 per prescription allowance to allow pharmacies to transition their business model. This is a benefit to pharmacies worth a total of \$24 million. About \$12 million will come from government and the rest from employer and private insurance programs.

We have prepared a [communication](#) that will be sent to plan members next week regarding these changes.

Questions?

Contact your Sun Life Financial group benefits representative.