

Focus Update



February 28, 2018

Federal Budget 2018 and the first steps towards National Pharma Care

The Federal government took the first tentative steps towards a national Pharma care program in the 2018 Federal Budget. The Federal Finance Minister announced the creation of an advisory council to recommend options and begin a national dialogue on the issue. Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ontario's former health minister, was introduced as the chair of a new council with a mandate to conduct nationwide consultations on how to proceed with a national program.

The notion of a national pharmacare program was first tabled in 1964, as part of the Royal Commission on Health Services. It was floated again in 1997 and 2002. Many agree that the current patchwork of public and private drug plans – which varies considerably by province – is not sustainable.

Sun Life believes that Clients should have access to healthcare innovations coming to the market, including prescription drugs that should be both affordable and accessible for all Canadians. We share the national concern about the sustainability of the current prescription drug model and Sun Life, along with the industry, has been vocal about this over the years.

Building on our relationships with public policy deciders and elected officials, we look forward to continued collaboration with Federal and Provincial governments to develop and define a National Pharmacare program that will close the gaps in coverage.

Working together, we can leverage the strengths of both the private and public systems, so governments and health insurers – including Sun Life – can deliver cost effective, innovative, accessible prescription drug coverage for all Canadians.

In the meantime, Sun Life Group Benefits will continue to do what we have always done – provide valuable resources to Canadian employers and employees by:

- Harnessing pharmacoeconomic data to develop products and services (including formularies) that will help mitigate the escalating costs of prescription drugs,
- Providing multiple “touchpoints” to educate and engage plan members through both traditional and digital channels,
- Developing innovative support tools, like *Ella*, our digital coach, and forging partnerships with pioneering, health-related start-ups and organizations so we can continue to deliver the innovative tools, products, and services that will help Canadians live healthier lives and achieve financial security.

We will continue to monitor the progress the new Advisory Council makes, and share developments with you as they arise.

Questions?

For more information, please contact your Sun Life Financial group benefits representative.

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