



Statement from the Canadian Paediatric Society on the *Canada Pharmacare Act*

(December 10, 2020, Ottawa, ON) - The Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) applauds the re-introduction of Bill C-213, the *Canada Pharmacare Act* in the House of Commons and urges the federal government to take the necessary steps to help make pharmacare in Canada a reality.

There is currently a significant gap between Canadian values and the reality of our healthcare system. Canada is the only country in the world with universal health care that excludes drug coverage. As a result, 1 in 10 Canadians cannot afford to take their prescription medications and almost one million Canadians have reduced spending on food or heat in order to afford medications. The devastating social, health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have further exposed the deficiencies in our current patchwork system of insurance coverage. With deepening health inequities for Canada's racialized and low-income communities and record job losses eroding access to employer-provided prescription coverage, the need for pharmacare has never been more urgent.

In conjunction with these inequities, children and youth face additional barriers to accessing affordable and effective medications. Policies governing the development, approval and reimbursement of medicines are largely designed for adults, neglecting the unique characteristics of the paediatric population. The establishment of paediatric-sensitive national pharmacare is an opportunity to correct the long-standing regulatory neglect that has led to a poor availability of paediatric drugs and child-friendly formulations. We therefore strongly support a pharmacare system that prioritizes the needs of children and youth and upholds the core principles reaffirmed in Bill C-213 of public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility.

We urge the federal government to work in collaboration with Indigenous leadership and their provincial and territorial counterparts to finally fulfil the vision of Medicare and ensure that all Canadians have equitable access to safe, effective and affordable prescription medications.

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