

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Institute on Ageing (NIA) Applauds Ontario's Expansion of OHIP+ to Cover Older Adults

Government Echoes NIA's National Seniors Strategy Recommendation

March 20, 2018, TORONTO – The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) applauds the decision by the Ontario government to cover prescription medications for Ontarians aged 65 and over.

[On March 20, 2018, the Government of Ontario announced that it would expand its OHIP+ program to cover older adults.](#) Since January 1, 2018, [OHIP+ has covered certain medications for Ontarians aged 24 and under](#), but will now cover those aged 65 and over as well.

The decision echoes recommendations made by [the National Institute on Ageing's National Seniors Strategy in 2015](#), which highlighted that co-payments in prescription medication plans have consistently been found to lead to decreased utilization of prescribed medications. The reduction and elimination of co-pays and deductibles, however, has consistently resulted in increased adherence. The National Seniors Strategy recommended that the federal government and its provincial and territorial partners take steps to ensure that older Canadians make no out of pocket payments for their necessary medications. The National Institute on Ageing is a new policy and research centre based at Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management in Toronto.

"This government is recognizing what the evidence and older adults have been saying for years: co-payments make it less likely that people will take their medications. With the expansion of OHIP+ we can expect to see older Ontarians being able to access all of their necessary medications," said Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Geriatrics at Sinai Health System and University Health Network.

"This is a smart policy decision by the Ontario government that will help millions of seniors in Ontario afford the medications they need," said Michael Nicin, Executive Director of the National Institute on Ageing. "It's encouraging to see the government act in line with our evidence-based recommendations, and we look forward to seeing our recommendation followed by provincial and federal governments across Canada."

The National Seniors Strategy also recommended that provinces and territories purchase prescriptions as a single buyer and institute appropriate prescribing practices to ensure that older patients are not prescribed unnecessary or inappropriate medications, both of which are steps that would contribute to keeping prescription medication costs down and ensuring a sustainable health care system for all. The NIA looks forward to these recommendations being implemented as well.

- Starting in August 2019, older Ontarians will be able to access 4,400 medications that will be covered by the expanded OHIP+
- 70% of older adults aged 65 to 79 take at least one prescription medicine
- 30% take at least five prescription medications concurrently

About the National Institute on Ageing (NIA)

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is a new policy and research centre based at Ryerson University in Toronto. The NIA is dedicated to enhancing successful ageing across the life course. It is unique in its mandate to consider ageing issues from a broad range of important perspectives, including those of financial, physical, psychological, and social wellness. The NIA is also focused on leading cross-disciplinary research to better understand the issues that can lead to the development of evidence-informed actionable insights that can meaningfully contribute towards shaping the innovative policies, practices and products that will be needed to address the multiple challenges and opportunities presented by Canada's coming of age. The NIA is committed to providing national leadership and promoting a collaborative approach that also seeks to continually establish municipal, provincial, federal and global partnerships with other academic centres, and other ageing-related organizations.

To learn more about the NIA visit our website at <http://www.ryerson.ca/nia> and follow us on Twitter @RyersonNIA

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