

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

National Institute on Ageing applauds Advisory Council Report on Pharmacare as solid first step

March 6th, 2019, Toronto. Today, the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare led by Dr. Eric Hoskins shared the first part of its report on the implementation of pharmacare. The Council has recommended the Government of Canada create a drug agency to oversee national pharmacare, a national formulary to harmonize coverage across the country, and a national drug data system.

The [National Institute on Ageing \(NIA\)](#) welcomes this first report and recommendations as a solid first step to finally getting Canadians much-needed pharmacare. The three recommendations made today lay the groundwork for the ultimate plan expected to be announced in June. A national formulary is critical to ensuring that all Canadians have access to a common list of drugs at a common price. A national agency will be required to coordinate amongst provinces. And none of this will be possible without a robust data system.

While the report does not address what specific model the Government should adopt – that direction will come in a subsequent report this summer- it clearly states national pharmacare should include a guarantee that all Canadians get the prescription drugs they need without financial barriers to access.

This is a core principle outlined by the NIA and the Alliance for a [National Seniors Strategy](#) which recommended the elimination of financial barriers to access prescription medications. Deductibles and co-pays consistently lead to reduced use of prescription medications. In order to have proper access and adherence, our national pharmacare program must be created without financial barriers. The report also supports the NIA's research laid out in our [National Seniors Strategy](#) that Canada is paying more per capita on prescription medications than almost any other country. Our current patchwork system neglects the needs of too many Canadians. We agree with the report that without reform our system will soon be at its breaking point.

NIA Director of Health Policy Research, Dr. Samir Sinha, says, "This report is only the first part of the plan but it's on the right track. Canadians should never have to make choices about taking prescribed medications based on their ability to pay- especially when co-pays and deductibles, no matter how small, have been shown to reduce access. We also need to create evidence-based guidelines for prescribing appropriate medications to support better overall prescribing practices. It's now in the hands of the federal government to take these recommendations, move them forward and make 2019 a historic year when Canada finally gets pharmacare."

We look forward to the Council's final report in the summer that will outline recommendations on the model Canada should adopt.

About the National Institute on Ageing (NIA)

The National Institute Ageing (NIA) is a think tank focused on meeting the realities of Canada's ageing population. We are Canada's only think tank dedicated to policy solutions at the intersections of healthcare, financial security, and social well-being in relation to ageing. With the backing of Ryerson University and our industry partners we work across private and public sectors providing solutions that promote the evolution and sustainability of Canadian systems and programs. Our mission is to make Canada the best place to grow up and grow old.

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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