

Fact Sheet

Who is Better Pharmacare Coalition (BPC)?

The BPC consists of 19 health organizations working together to call for appropriate access to evidence-based medicines that are proved effective and needed by patients in BC.

The BPC was formed in 1996 in response to BC PharmaCare policy of reference-based pricing not being reflective of current medical literature, best clinical practices and the needs of patients in BC.

About Reference Drug Program Expansion

The BC government cabinet recently approved amendments to the Drug Price Regulation that serve to create the three new reference drug categories. Angiotensin Receptor Blocker, Proton Pump Inhibitor and Statin reference categories are now in the regulations with specific product designations to be added in the spring.

The timeline for transitioning patients will be from June 1, 2016 through the end of November. On December 1, 2016 the new policy will be in effect.

BPC Public Opinion Poll

BPC has sought out the opinion of British Columbians on BC PharmaCare's Reference Drug Program.

BPC engaged Insights West to conduct an online survey in December 2015 to determine British Columbians' opinions on BC PharmaCare and in particular their opinions on the expansion of the Reference Drug Program.

Key Insights

- At first, it would seem that PharmaCare is working well. The level of satisfaction is 58% across British Columbia, and fewer than 10% say they are "very dissatisfied" with it.
- There is very little awareness of the PharmaCare Reference Drug Program: fewer than one-in-five British Columbians have seen, heard or read anything about it.

- The reaction of British Columbians to some of the changes brought by the Reference Drug Program is decidedly negative, particularly the notion of program administrators making decisions instead of doctors.
- Once British Columbians were informed of the PharmaCare Reference Drug Program, views change drastically with half saying they believe the policy is bad. It is important to note that the concerns are higher among PharmaCare users and those with a history of chronic disease in their household.

What concerns British Columbians

“PharmaCare not being able to handle requests quickly and efficiently if your doctor believes you should get a medication not covered by PharmaCare.” – 83%

“The administrators of the BC PharmaCare program implementing a policy that tells your doctor which medications he or she can prescribe for you, even if it goes against your doctor’s opinion of the best care for you.” – 82%

“Being unable to pay for more expensive medication that is not covered by PharmaCare.” – 81%, including 85% of those in the lowest income bracket (less than \$50k a year).

“Paying out-of-pocket for medications creating a financial hardship for you and your family.” – 79%, including 88% of those in the lowest income bracket.

“Changing BC PharmaCare’s Reference Drug Program to specify a ‘reference product’ you must take, or having to pay the difference out-of-pocket to stay on your current therapy.” – 76%

What British Columbians Agree On

“I might have to stop taking a medication for financial reasons if is if not fully covered by PharmaCare.” – 70%, including 85% of those in the lowest income bracket agree with this statement.

“Changing my medication because of a government decision, when I am stable on my current medication, will be bad for my health.” – 79%, including 81% of those aged 55+ agree with this statement.

“A choice of medication should be made together by me and my doctor, rather than by program administrators who are unaware of my medical history.” – 90% agree with this statement.