

Business weighs in as two governments pursue pharmacare

By: Sandra Dueck, Policy Analyst, Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

With the announcement of a Pharmacare Advisory Council in the 2018 federal budget, the issue is now one being discussed by both our provincial and federal governments. For the business community, at the Chamber Network level pharmacare has been an issue that has been discussed through the policy resolution process on several occasions with no real definitive result.

Now though with increasing government support the time has come to define the position of the business community and offer its perspective to our bureaucrats and elected leaders.

During the discussions in which I've been involved, debate often starts with how could Canada be a progressive country and yet not offer a pharmacare program? Not the best place to start as it could potentially lead to a solution that doesn't fit Canada's or Ontario's true need; a solution that is more expensive than it needs to be, or creates more red tape.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) recently released a report called "Principles for an Effective Pharmacare Program". The report authored by Ashley Challinor, Director of Policy, lays out a test of five principles in which a new pharmacare plan could be evaluated.



Those five principles include:

- Existing gaps in pharmaceutical coverage are identified and addressed to improve access to medications for those who need it
- The strengths of the public-private system are leveraged
- The program is outcomes-oriented and promotes sustainability and efficacy of the broader health care system
- Patients are able to access their medications in a timely manner
- Broad and appropriate access to innovative medications is ensured

Currently, as detailed in the OCC report, medicines taken in hospital are covered while those in the community are accessed through a variety of means including public drug plans, private group plans, individual insurance plans and payments out of pocket. Given the current breadth of access the OCC is

encouraging collaborative discussions with all health care system stakeholders from industry to policy makers and patients. Should consideration be given to a pharmacare program, the decision to move forward must also be evidence-based.

Who currently has coverage in Canada? The OCC report explains that with the implementation of OHIP+ (coverage to all Ontarians under 25), the Conference Board of Canada reports that 1.8% of Canadians do not have access to drug coverage and that 4.1 million Canadians that don't have private coverage are eligible but not enrolled in a public plan.

The OCC is also asking that the OHIP+ and any other new pharmacare program be evaluated after one year so adjustments can be made, if necessary. The Chamber Network also believes that the evaluation should be made public.

Ultimately, the business community is asking for a collaborative and evaluative solution that is targeted at those who are most affected while also creating a climate of sustainability and innovation for the industry.

The Peterborough Chamber of Commerce membership includes a significant number of members in the Health and Wellness category, Peterborough is the location of a regional hospital and we also know of continued innovation in health care through the Innovation Cluster and new businesses coming through entrepreneurial programs.

With nursing and new programs around mental health and healing arts Fleming College and Trent University are building the next generation of health care workers.

How can Peterborough weigh in on the discussion?

More: peterboroughchamber.ca/blog

Federal Budget 2018 and business

What we heard was:

- Support for women entrepreneurs
- A clearer path to Indigenous self-determination
- Improved skills development
- Continued investment in innovation research
- Clarity around taxing private corporations

However, what we didn't see was the following, both of which are important to accomplishing the above list:

- A comprehensive review of the tax system to ensure Canada continues to be an investment

magnet. This is particularly relevant in light of the significant tax changes being made in the United States.

- The lack of a concrete and responsible plan to balance the budget as budget 2018 adds a further \$18.1 billion to the national debt.

Also of importance to the Peterborough Chamber were the announcements around VIA Rail. The budget includes the renewal of the fleet and an additional \$8 million to continue to assess the High Frequency Rail Proposal. For us, it means the project is still on track.



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CHECK OUT OUR MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Our members do it all!

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Event Calendar

TUESDAY
March 13th, 2018

Taking the Mystery out of Medical Marijuana

The Carousel
116 Lansdowne Street East
Coffee's on at 7:00am
Speakers from 7:30-8:30am

Cost: Pay for your breakfast

Speaker: Erika Calhoun, Bodystream Medical Marijuana Services

TUESDAY
March 20th, 2018
(Chamber & DBIA Members only)

Bill 148 Information Session with the Ministry of Labour

Peterborough Library
5:00pm - 7:00pm

Details: Learn about the changes & role of the ESA officer.

Cost: Free
Note: Pre-registration required

WEDNESDAY
March 21st, 2018
(Chamber & WBN Members only)

5 Secrets to Social Media Success

Chamber Boardroom
175 George Street North

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Speaker: Sofie Andreou, Sofie Andreou & Associates

Cost: Free (Bring your lunch)

Note: Pre-registration required

TUESDAY
March 22nd, 2018

The Venue PTBO

286 George Street N

11:45am - 1:00pm

Speakers:
• Cam Taylor, Outdoorsmart & Venture North
• Sana Virji & Ribat Chowdoury, Ribitt
• Lynn Teatro, Teatro

Cost: Free
Note: Pre-registration required

TUESDAY
March 27th, 2018

Peterborough Golf & Country Club
1030 Armour Road

7:00am-9:30am

Details: City & County Planning Directors will be speaking about the future of the region.

Note: Pre-registration is required

FOR FIRMS WITH 1-50 EMPLOYEES

Insurance for small business that's anything but small

contact: Brian Bulger at 741-1400



Celebrations & Congratulations

- The Ear Depot is celebrating 5 Years in Peterborough
- Living Well Home Medical Equipment has recently expanded with a second location. Find them in Bowmanville at 100 King St East.
- Applewood Retirement Residence is celebrating its 30th anniversary

Local firms rewarded for work on raising a barn

We Design Group, Impact Communications along with the County of Peterborough received the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) award for Physical Infrastructure and Redevelopment Initiatives. It was for Lang Pioneer Village's campaign - Raise The Barn.



Featured Member Discount Program: Savino Human Resources Partners

Savino Human Resources Partners - Online Training

Chamber Members save on training costs with SHRP online Training Modules. Savino Human Resources Partners (SHRP), a local company, offers special member rates on government regulated training requirements including:

- AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) training
- Workplace Harassment Violence/Harassment Prevention
- Workplace Safety - WHMIS Training

To get a free trial or subscribe to these services, e-mail: info@savinohrp.ca

Chamber members, send your Member Milestones to reception@peterboroughchamber.ca or call 705-748-9771 x0.



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