



Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC

Representing seniors in British Columbia since 1950

www.coscobc.org

September 29, 2025

The Honorable Marjorie Michel P.C., M.P, Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada K1A 0A6
marjorie.michel@parl.gc.ca

Re: Canadian Dental Care Plan, Pharmacare, Safe Long-term Care Act

Dear Minister Michel:

This letter is to congratulate you on your new role as Minister of Health and inform you of the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC's (COSCO BC) fervent support for federal health care initiatives that support the health and wellbeing of all Canadians.

COSCO BC is a non-profit, non-partisan, independent, volunteer driven organization that has promoted the well-being of seniors since 1950, representing over 80,000 members from 70 affiliated seniors-led organizations across BC. COSCO advocates for policies that allow seniors to remain active, independent, and engaged in society. We keep our members informed of the plan and are vigilant in counteracting disinformation spread by others through our discussions at meetings, website and articles in our quarterly *COSCO News*.

We write to let you know that we celebrated the implementation of the Canada Dental Care Plan (CDCP) knowing that many seniors would be able to access dental care and have improved oral health. We also celebrated the passing of the Pharmacare Act, the first phase of national and universal pharmacare that will provide universal access to diabetes medications and contraception. We were very pleased to learn that Prime Minister Mark Carney recently reiterated his support for this Act and reassured Canadians that Health Canada would continue to actively negotiate agreements with provinces that have not already signed on.

We are hopeful that the current federal government will continue to maintain and support improvement in these important programs. For example, regarding the CDCP there is a need for alternative processes to remove the annual requirement to re-establish eligibility. Furthermore, we would suggest that the impact of the program criteria that disqualifies Canadians who have access to private insurance must be reviewed through the lens of equity. Not all Canadians with apparent access

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to private dental insurance through employer/pension plans are able to access dental care due to unaffordable premiums and/or co-payments or limits on life-time coverage. Also the CDCP income thresholds used to determine eligibility and co-payments should be indexed annually in order to keep pace with inflation.

In closing, we express our support for the government's commitment to improving the quality, safety, equity, and availability of long-term care services through their support for the new national standards and the extensive national consultation that was conducted in 2023 to inform the development of the Safe Long-term Care Act. We note that a goal was set to table legislation in 2024, and we would urge the government to follow through on this intention.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, which are so important to the quality of life and well-being of older Canadians.

Sincerely,

Leslie Gaudette

Leslie Gaudette, MSc (Epidemiology)

President

I am grateful to live on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Stó:lō people, home of the Katzie, Kwantlen and Semiahmoo First Nations, and Métis.

Louise Holland

Louise Holland, MSW (she/her)

Chair, Health Committee COSCO

I respectfully acknowledge that I am privileged to live on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Lheidl T'enneh.

cc. The Hon. Stephanie McLean, Secretary of State for Seniors
Dan Mazier, Shadow Minister for Health, Conservative Party of Canada
Anna Roberts, Shadow Minister for Seniors, Conservative Party of Canada
Luc Thériault, Santé, Bloc Québécois
Andréanne Larouche, Aînés, Bloc Québécois
Don Davies, Leader of the New Democratic Party
Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada
The Hon. Josie Osborne, Minister of Health, Province of British Columbia
Susie Chant, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long-Term Care