

December 18, 2014

The Honorable Eric Hoskins
Minister, Health and Long Term Care
Submitted via email: ehoskins.mpp@liberal.ola.org

Re: The time for national pharmacare has come

Dear Minister Hoskins,

The Schizophrenia Society of Ontario would like to applaud the work you are doing to break down barriers to healthcare by striving to put pharmacare back on the national agenda. We appreciate the leadership and political courage that is required to move this idea of universal access to health care forward, and we thank you for your continued effort in leading these discussions.

The Schizophrenia Society of Ontario (SSO) is a non-profit health organization that supports individuals, families, caregivers and communities affected by schizophrenia and psychosis across the province. For over 30 years we have made positive changes in the lives of people affected by schizophrenia by building supportive communities through services and education, advocating for system change and by researching the psychosocial factors that directly impact mental illness.

Access to timely, affordable pharmacare is an issue that significantly impacts the people and communities that we work with. Since our inception, the SSO heard from individuals and families about challenges that they experience with accessing essential mental health medications due to unaffordable costs. As you have observed, too often the ability to afford medications impacts overall ability to live a healthy and fulfilling life. We strongly agree with your perspective that “no Canadian should have to choose between putting food on the table or filling their latest prescription” and we fully support a national pharmacare program that would make this scenario obsolete.

We are currently in the process of finalizing a white paper on access to medications for individuals and families affected by mental illness. Our findings and recommendations are



consistent with your message that national pharmacare is the most appropriate direction for improving health outcomes for all Canadians.

We will be reaching out to your Ministry in the new year to present our findings and recommendations. We look forward to working with your Ministry as this vision that promotes Canadian values of fairness and equity becomes a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Alberti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Alberti
CEO
Schizophrenia Society of Ontario

CC Omar Khan, Chief of Staff, MOHLTC
Jacob Mkysartinian, Senior Policy Advisor, MOHLTC
Derrick Araneda, Director of Stakeholder Relations, MOHLTC
Andrew Boozary, Senior Advisor, MOHLTC
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