



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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B.C. working families to get better access to prescription medication

The B.C. Ministry of Health announced today it will make prescription medicines more affordable for low-income, working families, by reducing or eliminating PharmaCare deductibles.

“We know that too often families and seniors choose between buying food or paying for their medication,” says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside.

“Good public health care should not be based on what people can afford, instead it should be based on the best health outcomes for all citizens. That’s why this move by the NDP government with the support of the BC Green Party to improve access to important and effective medications is welcome news.”

Over the next three years, the province has committed \$105 million to eliminate or reduce Pharmacare deductibles for 240,000 B.C. families. All families with household net incomes under \$45,000 will benefit, and in particular, families with net annual incomes between \$15,000 and \$30,000 will have no deductible, starting January 1, 2019.

These will be the first changes to deductibles since 2003. Prior to these changes, hundreds of thousands of families faced relatively large jumps in their deductibles, as incomes increased past certain thresholds.

According to Ministry of Health studies, these jumps were often accompanied by decreases in drug spending, suggesting that families were not filling prescriptions due to affordability.

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