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**September 16, 2024**

**Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology  
The Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K1A 0A4**

**Dear Canadian Senators**

**RE: PASSAGE OF BILL C-64 AN ACT RESPECTING PHARMACARE**

I write to you today with an urgent message from our membership across Canada. The National Pensioners' Federation (NPF) is a national, not for profit non sectarian group of 350 seniors chapters, clubs, groups, organizations and individual supporters across Canada with a collective membership of 1,000,000 seniors and retirees devoted entirely to the welfare and best interests of aging Canadians. Our mission is to stimulate public interest in the welfare of aging Canadians. Our goal is to help seniors and retirees have a life of dignity, independence and financial security.

The National Pensioners Federation recognizes that legislation enacting Bill C-64, an Act Respecting Pharmacare, is transformational and life-changing. This step towards a Universal Publically Funded and Delivered drug coverage program is tantamount to saving lives and dollars in our beloved public health care system. Canadians have invested in Public Medicare for decades. They deserve sustainable, fair and equitable, access to prescription medicines based on need, and not their ability to pay. All Canadians, but especially Older Adults who

have greatly invested in our Health Care system are relying on you to support the passage of Bill c-64 in the Senate.

#### THE STATUS QUO:

**The patient pays:** Our public Medicare system does not cover the cost of prescription medicines, leaving many patients on the hook to pay for necessary drugs unless they're in a hospital.

**No coverage:** One-in-five people report they do not have private drug insurance – from low paid workers to self-employed entrepreneurs (Cortes & Smith, 2022). It's an issue of affordability for families. Immigrants and Racialized people are hit especially hard.

**People don't heal:** This situation leaves people struggling to pay for essential medicine, or they might skip taking their meds for their physical or mental health altogether. Their condition worsens, and they may end up in the hospital's Emergency Department.

#### THE SOLUTION RESTS WITH YOUR SUPPORT IN THE SENATE:

In 2019 after extensive consultations, the federal government's Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, led by Dr. Eric Hoskins, recommended: "the federal government work with provincial and territorial governments and stakeholders to establish universal, single-payer, public pharmacare in Canada" (Health Canada, 2019). Together, we have invested and accomplished so much. Today, Canadian's are relying on you to support the passage of Bill C-64 in the Senate, without amendment and or further delays. Let us work together to accomplish more before the current government session ends to ensure medical benefits flow to entrusting Canadians.

In closing, I thank you for your respectful consideration of our priority to achieve support and passage of Bill c-64 through all levels of government. A priority of critical importance to Ageing Canadians.

Yours Sincerely,

Trish McAuliffe

President, National Pensioners' Federation

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