



CPhA Response to a Question by Senator Gigi Osler

During an appearance at the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on Thursday September 26, 2024, Senator Osler asked the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) the following question and asked for a written response:

“You suggested an amendment to broaden the definition of pharmacare to include pharmacare services. Could that change in definition be a step toward harmonizing national pharmacare across provinces and territories and if the definition is not changed what could be a possible consequence?”

Response:

The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) thanks Senator Osler for her question and is grateful for the opportunity to respond.

Broadening the definition of pharmacare to include pharmacy services is indeed a step toward harmonizing national pharmacare across provinces and territories. This amendment recognizes the essential role pharmacists play in optimizing drug therapy, managing chronic conditions, and improving patient outcomes — services that vary across jurisdictions due to differing regulatory frameworks and funding models. Including pharmacy services in the definition ensures a more consistent and integrated approach to delivering pharmacare nationwide, enhancing patient access and reducing disparities between regions.

If the definition is not broadened to include pharmacy services, the consequence could be that national pharmacare remains narrowly focused on drug coverage alone, which limits the ability to leverage the full scope of pharmacist expertise in medication management and patient care. This could result in missed opportunities to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the pharmacare system, as well as a continued patchwork of service availability across Canada.

CPhA’s recommended amendment:

pharmacare means a program that provides coverage of prescription drugs and related products, **including pharmacy services**. (*régime d’assurance médicaments*)