



Statement from the Canadian Paediatric Society on the Final Report of the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare

June 14, 2019

The Canadian Paediatric Society welcomes the release of the Final Report of the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, “A Prescription for Canada: Achieving Pharmacare for All”. The report is a reflection of extensive consultation with the healthcare community and lays out thoughtful and strategic recommendations for improving the health and wellness of all Canadians.

As noted in the report, there is currently a significant gap between Canadian values and the reality of our healthcare system. Canada is currently the only country in the world with universal health care that excludes drug coverage. As a result, 1 in 10 Canadians cannot afford to take their prescription medications and almost one million Canadians have reduced spending on food or heat in order to afford medications.

This is an issue for all Canadians, but children and youth face additional barriers to accessing affordable and effective medications. Policies governing the development, approval and reimbursement of medicines are largely designed for adults, neglecting the unique characteristics of the paediatric population. Consequently, the Canadian Paediatric Society strongly reaffirms recommendation 29 of the report, that *“the national formulary include prescription drugs that respond to the specific and unique needs of children and youth, and that a strategy be developed to address the availability of approved drugs and formulations for them”*.

The establishment of paediatric-sensitive national pharmacare is an opportunity to correct long-standing regulatory neglect that has led to the poor availability of paediatric drugs and child-friendly formulations. Children are not just little adults. They have unique prescription needs that must be prioritized within a national drug formulary. We therefore strongly support developing a new and comprehensive national, evidence-based formulary with leadership from paediatric experts. A paediatric-sensitive formulary will inform public drug funding and support safe and effective prescribing for all children and youth.

We thank the Advisory Council members and staff, and Dr. Eric Hoskins for his leadership as Chair, and urge Health Canada and all levels of government to prioritize the implementation of paediatric-sensitive national pharmacare to ensure all children and youth have equitable access to safe, effective and affordable prescription medications.

Sincerely,

[Original Signed By]

Dr. Ellen Wood, CPS President