

Seniors will pay more.

A number of pharmacies were giving rebates on the drug co-payment to seniors who are under the NB Prescription Drug Program-Seniors (Plan A).

We have just found out that since yesterday, October 1, 2014, NB pharmacies will stop giving out this rebate.

Why, after a number of years, are pharmacies stopping this practice?

Last April, the NB Pharmacist' Association and the NB Minister of Health have signed a Memorandum of Agreement where it is stated in Article 8- Beneficiaries Charges-*A participating provider shall charge beneficiaries in accordance with Subsection 15(1) of the Regulations. Further, the Department expects full compliance with all provisions of the Act and Regulations by participating providers. (Document attach)*

The NB Pharmacists' Association has also sent to all pharmacies a leaflet entitled- Enforcement of Co-Pay Regulation in which it says under- *NB Prescriptions Drug Plan Patients- Pharmacies are requires to collect the co-pays as set out in the New Brunswick Prescriptions Drug Program.* It means that pharmacies which were giving a monetary rebate to seniors on their prescription co-pay (\$9.00 or \$15.00 per prescription) will not now be able to do so; an added financial burden for these seniors.

A large portion of seniors who are under the NB Prescription Drug Program are receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement, meaning that they are generally under the poverty level.

We have to remember that two years ago (January 2012), the provincial government raise by 50% (\$250 to \$500 per year) the maximum co-pay that seniors under this program had to disburse for their prescriptions.

One of the arguments used is that citizens have to be conscious of the high cost of prescription drug. We can agree with this, but citizens living below the poverty line certainly understand the cost of drug. What has to be also taken into consideration is that some have more than one prescription, so the costs are high.

One of the side effects of this rebate could be that seniors will not get all their prescriptions because they can't afford it, so their situation could deteriorate and would cost more for the health system.

For information:

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NB Senior Citizens Federation- Robéa Cormier-857-8242

For your information, please understand that there are three distinct Provincial Prescription Drug Program. The one that we are talking about is the first one.

- 1- Prescription Drug Program –Seniors (Plan A) . The co-pay is a fix amount \$9.00 or \$15.00 per prescription and a maximum of \$500 per year- details on the following website.
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.8875.html)
- 2- Prescription drug Program- Adults in Licenced Residential Facilities (Plan E) which has a co-pay of \$4.00 per prescription and a maximum of \$250 per year. Details on the following website. Also for social assistance beneficiaries.
http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.8895.html
- 3- The new NB Drug Plan which has a percentage for its co-pay of 30% or maximum \$30 per prescription. For details-
<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/health/MedicarePrescriptionDrugPlan/NBDrugPlan.html.html>