



For Immediate Release
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New BC PharmaCare Coverage Discriminatory to Adults with ADHD

VANCOUVER – On April 18th BC PharmaCare announced that it was expanding its existing coverage of medications for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the paediatric population, by adding three long acting ADHD medications under the Special Authority (SA) program. The SA program covers medications for patients under special medical circumstances. The SA program will still require a physician’s written request and documentation of failure on cheaper short acting medications (either Ritalin or Dexedrine).

In the fall of 2015, CADDRA, an alliance of health care professionals working in the field of ADHD; individual B.C physicians; and CADDAC, a national ADHD awareness and advocacy organization, called on the B.C. government to take immediate action to provide coverage for all long-acting medications for all age groups diagnosed with ADHD.

CADDRA and CADDAC along with BC medical practitioners welcome these expanded medication options for children. But British Columbia continues to lag significantly behind other provinces by denying coverage to individuals over 19, thereby discriminating against adults with ADHD.

“ADHD does not disappear once someone turns nineteen. Impairments will continue to impact school and workplace functioning and when ADHD is not treated it results in increased, health, justice, and social service costs.” says Heidi Bernhardt, President and Executive Director, CADDAC.

Why is this PharmaCare expansion good news?

“Similar to antidepressant and other mental health medications, ADHD treatment through medication is not a “one size-fits-all” scenario, so adding more choice improves our ability “to get a better treatment fit.” explains Dr. Doron Almagor, CADDRA’s President. “Long-acting medications are better tolerated, have fewer side effects, greater effectiveness, less abuse potential, and improved adherence. Long-acting ADHD medications are currently the most widely prescribed ADHD medications and are listed as the first-line medication treatment option by the Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines.”

Why is this PharmaCare change bad news?

On turning 19, children who have had access to these medications through Limited Coverage will now be refused treatment under PharmaCare. To qualify for access to these

newer medications as a child, they had to fail on a trial on the short acting medications. Therefore, reverting back to these medications is not an option.

“The BC government policy is 'Your ADHD will no longer be treated after your 19th birthday'. This is at the exact time when patients are leaving home and looking for work or going to college, one of the most vulnerable times in their lives,” explains Dr. Don Duncan, Clinical Director, BC Interior ADHD Clinic. Dr. Derryck Smith, Clinical Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychiatry, University of British Columbia adds, *“At a time in their lives of great transition and change and when their ADHD impairments will be most tested, these patients will be set up to fail.”*

The only way that adults with ADHD, might access these newer medications is for their doctor to spend hours mining years of medical data from numerous sources, and writing lengthy reports describing symptoms and past failed medication trials.

“I can't tell you how lucky I was to find a doctor willing to spend hours doing the paperwork required for me to obtain the medication I needed to treat my ADHD” Jessica Lamb-Brown who was first diagnosed with ADHD as a young adult expressed. *“I used to hate myself and my failures, but once I started ADHD medication it allowed me to do what I knew I could do.”* Jessica who completed her education and is now working, started her treatment on short acting medication which worked for a while but eventually needed to be changed to a long-acting medication. *“My medication needs to be reviewed again but I don't even want to pursue this because I know the amount of time and effort it will take to reply through this arduous process.”*

Increasing treatment choices for children and adolescents with ADHD using Pharmacare is good. Barring adult patients' access to these treatment options is discriminatory. This will result in increased post-secondary school failure, more job loss and unemployment and greater overall costs to health care.

Learn More:

www.caddra.ca

www.caddac.ca

ABOUT CADDAC

CADDAC is a national not-for-profit organization that provides leadership in education, awareness and advocacy for ADHD organizations and individuals with ADHD across Canada. CADDAC provides a wide-range of information for, parents, adults, children/adolescents, educators and health care providers on its website, www.caddac.ca, as well as information on our up-coming conference and future educational events.

About CADDRA

CADDRA is a Canadian non-profit, multi-disciplinary alliance of healthcare professional working in the field of ADHD. We produce the Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines – now in its 3rd edition – and assessment toolkits. CADDRA provides education, training and support on ADHD for healthcare clinicians through our annual national conference, training courses and eLearning portal.

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