

Cheryl Koehn, Chair
Better Pharmacare Coalition

May 4, 2009

Dear Ms Koehn:

Thank you for your April 29th letter regarding issues that interest the Better Pharmacare Coalition. Please accept this response on behalf of all BC Liberal Party candidates.

On May 21, 2008, the BC Liberal government released the Pharmaceutical Task Force report, accepting all 12 recommendations. The Task Force was initiated by our government in the interests of improving pharmaceutical policy for both patients and taxpayers. After hearing from a wide range of stakeholders, from disease groups and pharmacy to generics and brand companies, the insightful analysis provided by the Task Force was welcomed by the Ministry of Health Services. Since that time, progress has been made on all of the recommendations. At the time of the release, it was acknowledged that some of the recommendations were complex and would take some time to plan and implement. We remain committed to the recommendations.

The implementation continues to be guided by six principles:

- The best interests of the patient are paramount.
- The B.C. government is obliged to seek the best value possible for taxpayer dollars in its expenditures.
- The foundation of all drug benefit decisions will be predicated upon a transparent evidence-based review process.
- The B.C. government is committed to fair, open and transparent procurement processes.
- All persons involved in making decisions respecting the procurement of goods and services by government must be free from conflict of interest, both real and perceived.
- The B.C. government values a healthy, competitive pharmaceutical industry that will continue to provide both financial and human resource investments in B.C.

B.C. faces increasing demand for prescriptions each year – with a 46 per-cent increase over the past four years from 18.3 claims per patient in 2002 to 26.8 claims per patient in 2006. In the past two years, PharmaCare has added more than 480 individual generic drugs and more than 50 brand drugs to its formulary. Since 2001, PharmaCare's budget has increased by more than 60 per cent, from \$654 million to \$1.062 billion in 2009/10.

Thank you for the opportunity to address issues that concern the members of the Better Pharmacare Coalition.

Sincerely,

The BC Liberal Party

