

# PHARMASAVE

## CROWELL'S PHARMASAVE

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I am a pharmacist and owner of 6 independently owned and operated pharmacies in and around HRM. In addition, I am the Vice President of the PANS and chairman of the Economics Committee. I support the government's goal of reducing generic prices however, it should be noted that pharmacy has always been a partner in this goal as evidenced by the Pharmacare allowance, unique to Nova Scotia in that it requires that we sell the bulk of our generic products at a 15% discount to Pharmacare beneficiaries. It is important to note that my support of Bill 17 is contingent on the successful negotiation of a tariff agreement that fairly compensates pharmacies for the services they provide.

Please understand, generic allowances are not a bonus. They are a crucial part of the pharmacy reimbursement model and are used IN FULL to offset a government reimbursement model that fails to even cover the cost of dispensing:

- Current dispensing fee- \$10.62
- True cost of dispensing? Over \$14\*\*\*

Currently we lose \$4.00 every time we dispense a prescription.

### No Charge Professional Services

In addition to providing core dispensing services below cost, pharmacy also provides the public with other professional services at absolutely no charge such as:

- Free delivery, often over great distances in rural areas.
- Nearly instant access to a pharmacist at NO COST for advice on over-the-counter medications, prescription medications and disease state management.
- Constant liaising between patients and doctors clarifying prescription orders, discussing allergies and preventing drug interactions.
- Constant liaising between patients and their drug plans including Pharmacare. When a medication is not paid for online the patient is prevented from initiating the therapy the physician has requested thereby reducing their access to health care.

### Access to Health Care

Pharmacists are currently the most accessible health professionals, by far, in the health care system.

- In many small towns, distant or near to HRM, the pharmacist is the only health professional available at certain times.
  - Weekends; as most stores are open 7 days a week and on holidays.
  - After hours; as most stores are open evenings or late into the night.

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### **IMPACT 2**

**I will make decisions on store operating hours and staffing levels that make financial sense.**

- Only one of my six pharmacies does enough business on the weekend (when the doctor's offices are closed) to justify staying open. I will consider closing my stores on weekends and holidays. Physicians offices close around 5pm and allowing for some time for patients to come in after work, I'll consider closing my stores at 7pm on weekdays. Patients who are out of their pills will have to go to the ER to get their medication after hours and on weekends and holidays.
- I will reduce all excess staffing. Not mentioning the effect on the individual staff member who has their hours reduced, patients can expect much longer wait times and sudden store closures when the pharmacist is ill.

### **IMPACT 3**

**The bank is going to require their loan payment every month. I will layoff staff and eliminate charitable donations as required to keep my stores open. I need to remove over 1 million dollars from our expense line annually to achieve this goal.**

- Had we known what government legislation would do to our industry we would not have invested millions into these new projects. There will be absolutely no new investment at all for the foreseeable future.
- Effectively immediately, we will be eliminating all extra spending. The biggest impact is to the charitable organizations that require our support to the tune of \$100,000/year. Unfortunately we will have no choice but to pull our \$100,000 donation to the creation of the new East Hants Sportsplex in an effort to control our budget.
- I have already laid off one full time staff member and have chosen not to replace a full time pharmacist in anticipation of these changes. Front store staff, pharmacy staff and our office staff have seen their hours reduced substantially.

We'll need to save about \$500,000 in wages annually I expect so something like 4 pharmacists and 10-20 support staff will lose their jobs. We'll have to consider whether we can continue to absorb the losses in Bedford that are so typical to a new store. Marginal stores like Timberlea, Stewiacke and Shubenacadie will likely see their hours reduced and as they are the only pharmacies in their respective communities, access to health care and prescriptions on the weekend and after hours will mean our patients will have to drive to Truro or Halifax.

On behalf of my staff of 150 Nova Scotians, I ask today for Government to delay Bill 17 until a new tariff agreement is in place.

\*\*\*\$13.61-\$14.93\*\* - (footnote-MentorRx study 2008, Ontario) \$13.61\*\* (Wade Locke report NFLD, 2008)