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Pharmacies respond

Letter

Tuesday, November 06, 2007

The Competition Bureau's examination of generic-drug costs failed to acknowledge that allowances from generic-drug manufacturers are passed on to patients through pharmacy services, which are severely under-funded by governments and other payers.

Pharmacies invest income from rebates back into unfunded pharmacy services, which improve quality of life for patients and keep them out of hospital.

The maximum B.C.'s PharmaCare will pay per prescription has been frozen at \$8.60 since 2003.

A 2006 study by the B.C. Pharmacy Association, the Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores and the B.C. Ministry of Health showed that, when all pharmacist functions are considered, the cost per prescription is \$13.60.

Those functions include filling, verifying, counselling, helping with adherence, developing care plans, preventing interactions, consulting with other health professionals, assisting with private health plans and more.

The significant gap between compensation and cost is made up for by rebates or allowances provided to pharmacies by generic-drug manufacturers.

Looking for ways to cut costs in the health-care system is necessary. But funding for pharmacy services is needed to provide patients with essential pharmaceutical care.

Marnie Mitchell,

B.C. Pharmacy Association

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