



**BC Pharmacy Association announces interim agreement reached with government on Pharmaceutical Task Force Recommendations**

VANCOUVER, Dec. 12 /CNW/ - In a landmark agreement between the government of B.C. and the BC Pharmacy Association, a collaborative approach to implementing recommendations contained in the Pharmaceutical Task Force Report has been reached.

The agreement, with the Ministry of Health Services sets out the strategies for developing a stable, long-term, cost-efficient delivery method of sustainable patient-care and pharmaceutical services for British Columbians.

Beginning January 1st, 2009, savings generated from cost reductions on the amount government pays for new generic drugs, as well as a new approach to payment of fees for frequent dispensing of drugs, will be used to enhance services to pharmacy patients.

Under the agreement, an estimated savings of \$29-million is expected to be achieved with these new initiatives. Immediately \$9-million will be reinvested towards compensating pharmacists for providing clinical services of adapting or renewing prescriptions at no cost to patients. Savings will also be used to design and develop innovative approaches to maximizing the use of a pharmacist's knowledge, skills and abilities to support better patient-care services in British Columbia.

"We are pleased to be working cooperatively with government and to be able to contribute our expertise and experience in improving and enhancing the delivery of pharmaceutical services in a cost-effective manner," said Marnie Mitchell, CEO of the BC Pharmacy Association.

"This has been a tough set of negotiations and while we clearly support the agreement we also recognize there will be negative financial effects on some pharmacies. We will be monitoring the impacts of these changes on our members as we proceed towards a longer-term agreement in 2009," said Mitchell.

The BC Pharmacy Association represents 2170 pharmacists and 660 pharmacies in B.C. who provide trusted advice and accessible care to patients throughout British Columbia.

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**Contact:**

Susan Ogilvie  
Director, Communications  
(604) 269-2863, cell: (778) 896-3044  
[susan.ogilvie@bcpharmacy.ca](mailto:susan.ogilvie@bcpharmacy.ca)