

Tentative Agreement Reached between Pharmacy Association and Department of Health and Wellness

DARTMOUTH – After resuming negotiations earlier this week, a new tentative pharmacy tariff agreement has been reached between the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia (PANS) and the Department of Health and Wellness. Full details of the agreement will be shared with PANS members after a final agreement is confirmed by both sides.

“This is an incredibly difficult time for pharmacists as they try to provide the best care to their patients” said Allison Bodnar, Executive Director of PANS. “While there continues to be a major shortfall in compensation to pharmacies for core dispensing services, which may result in fewer pharmacy services and longer wait times, the provincial government has made a number of modest improvements through the course of negotiations that will help us move forward in a positive direction together.”

Bill 17, a new law passed by the provincial government this spring which will come into effect on July 1, will result in a loss of almost 40 percent of revenue on every prescription. PANS has been negotiating with the Department of Health and Wellness for the last two months to address the shortfall in funding created by this legislation and to reasonably compensate pharmacists for the services they provide.

“This deal is the first step in addressing the consequences of Bill 17 and closing the gap between the compensation paid by the provincial government and the cost to pharmacy to dispense a prescription,” said Rose Dipchand, President of PANS. “Pharmacies must still evaluate how they will deal with the very real losses that will occur when this legislation comes into effect next week and I expect there will be changes in many pharmacies over the next few months.”

Dipchand and Bodnar stressed that pharmacists and pharmacies remain committed to ensuring the best possible service for Nova Scotians.

The agreement with the provincial government also provides new funding for medication reviews, prescription adaptation and therapeutic substitution for Pharmacare beneficiaries.

“One positive element of this agreement is the government’s commitment to invest in three new pharmacy services,” said Andrew Buffett, owner and pharmacist, “This small step will allow us to begin working within our expanded scope of practice brought about by the provincial government last year and do even more to protect the health of our patients.”

Another benefit to reaching an agreement is that seniors and other beneficiaries under the various provincial Pharmacare programs should not see any disruption in the billing process.

Both the legislation and this new agreement will come into effect on July 1.

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