

MANITOBA'S PHARMACARE PROGRAM

Pharmacare is a universal, comprehensive prescription drug benefit for any Manitoban, with benefits based on family income. Since 1971, pharmacare has protected Manitobans from financial hardships resulting from prescription drug expenses. The Prescription Drug Cost Assistance Act and regulations guide how the program works.

Manitoba's program covers 100 per cent of eligible drug costs once the income-based deductible is reached, regardless of age or medical condition.

Since 1999, over 2,000 new drugs have been added to pharmacare and over 24,000 more families are benefiting from the program. In March 2008, a new generic drug submission policy allowed the province to put 120 new generic drugs on the pharmacare formulary. This is estimated to save \$4 million per year, which is reinvested into pharmacare to help keep it the most comprehensive prescription drug program in the country.

Pharmacare currently lists about 5,000 drugs. Examples of high-cost drugs that are included under pharmacare include:

- Betaseron, for patients with multiple sclerosis. On average, this costs \$16,802 per patient per year and pharmacare covers an average of \$14,800.
- Gleevec, for cancer patients. It costs an average of \$33,480 per patient per year and pharmacare covers an average of \$31,400.
- Enbrel, for patients with rheumatoid arthritis. On average, this costs \$16,614 per patient per year. Pharmacare covers an average of \$15,000.