



ONTARIO PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION

Advocating Excellence
in Practice and Care



WHO WE ARE

The Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) is Canada's largest pharmacy-based advocacy organization and continuing professional development provider for pharmacy professionals. With over 24,000 pharmacy professionals practicing across Ontario, the OPA is committed to evolving the pharmacy profession and advocating for excellence in practice and patient care.

By leveraging the expertise of pharmacy professionals, supporting them to practice to their full scope and improving patient access to care, The OPA works with government and health system partners to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of Ontario's health care system.

CURRENT CONTEXT

The Government of Ontario has taken meaningful steps to make care more accessible and convenient for people across the province delivering real, measurable impact.

Over **14 million** COVID-19 vaccines have been administered through community pharmacies.

Over **2 million** minor ailment assessments have been provided to Ontarians since the inception of the program in January 2023.

The pharmacy sector contributes **\$6.3 billion** to Ontario's GDP and supports more than **94,000 jobs**.

Pharmacy professionals are delivering more care than ever. Despite the critical progress we are making to better connect patients to care, we can't forget about or leave behind the pharmacy professionals who make this possible.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Over the past several years, the Ontario government, in partnership with the OPA, has improved access to essential care in communities across Ontario. Sustaining this progress and continuing to expand access to convenient care depends on supporting the financial sustainability of the pharmacy sector.

1. Supporting the Sustainability of the Pharmacy Profession

Stagnant reimbursement models threaten pharmacy viability. Ontario's dispensing fee under the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program has remained frozen at \$8.83 since 2014, despite increases in operating costs such as wages, rent, technology, software, inventory and supplies. Dispensing fees are a critical to supporting the daily operations of community pharmacies. Ontario currently has the lowest fee in Canada, sitting approximately 34% below the provincial average of \$13.38.

To address this sustainability gap, the OPA recommends a phased increase to the ODB dispensing fee from \$8.83 to \$11.58 over four years, followed by an annual increase based on the rate of inflation.

2. Improving Access to Care for Ontarians

Pharmacy professionals can do more to connect Ontarians to the care they need when and where they need it. Enabling them to provide additional care services, including but not limited to the government proposed expansions of scope to allow pharmacists to assess and prescribe for additional minor ailments and administer additional vaccines, would improve patient access to timely, high-quality care and enhance system capacity.

To ensure pharmacies are prepared to deliver these additional services to Ontarians, the OPA encourages the government to approve and implement these new measures by July 1, 2026.

3. Protecting Patient Choice in Pharmacy

Every Ontarian should be able to choose the pharmacy they go to. Closed preferred provider networks (PPNs) restrict choice and compromise continuity of care. In winter 2025, the Ontario government made a critically important step forward to pass "Any Willing Provider" legislation to protect patient access and choice.

To support successful implementation, we encourage the government to continue working in close partnership with the OPA.

4. Strengthening Pharmacy's Role in Primary Care

Pharmacy professionals are well positioned to play a bigger role in primary care, particularly in the management of chronic diseases. While pharmacists are already able to provide services such as prescription adaptations and renewals, point-of-care testing, and injections, the lack of public funding limits patient access and uptake, placing unnecessary pressure on the primary care system.

To improve access to care and relieve system strain, the OPA is calling for targeted public investment to fund pharmacy services already within scope.