Stitching the gaps in the Canadian public drug coverage patchwork?

* A review of provincial pharmacare policy changes 2000 to 2010

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The Canada Health Act
Shared Policy Goals, Independent Provincial Policy Action?

- “No Canadian should suffer undue financial hardship in accessing needed drug therapies” – First Ministers, 2004

- “Affordable access to drugs is fundamental to equitable health outcomes for all our citizens” – The Council of the Federation, 2004

- “We will work to ensure that Atlantic Canadians have access to catastrophic drug coverage” – The Council of Atlantic Premiers, 2005
Objectives

• To review changes in provincial drug benefit programs from 2000 to 2010

• To identify:
  o Which, if any, plan design(s) are emerging as a national standard
  o Where the gaps in public coverage remain
  o Implications for national pharmacare
Plan Information

• Historical editions of *Provincial Drug Benefit Programs* (CPhA periodical)

• Provincial government websites and personnel
Plan Characteristics

• Eligibility, premiums, and patient cost-sharing requirements

• Three beneficiary groups:
  – Social assistance beneficiaries
  – Seniors
  – General population (non-seniors)
Review of Provincial Policy Changes
Legend

= no coverage

= “catastrophic” income-based coverage

= deductible + co-pay

= co-pay only

= “first-dollar” coverage (no cost-sharing)

P = premiums

= cost-sharing differs by income

low band = ‘lower’ incomes, high band = ‘higher’ incomes
Social Assistance
Seniors
General Population
Many Goals, Little Change

• Expansion of pharmacare in Canada has not been substantial

• May partly reflect the evolving definition of what constitutes “expansion” over the past decade and the increasing focus on last-dollar catastrophic coverage.
Catastrophic Income-Based Coverage
An Emerging National Standard

“All the forces in the world are not so powerful as an idea whose time has come” – Victor Hugo
Catastrophic Income-Based Coverage
Just another drug coverage patchwork?
The Federal Role?
Last-Dollar First, First-Dollar Lost?