

Fair Drug Prices for Nova Scotians

Generic Drug Pricing Examples

As part of its plan to get fair drug prices for Nova Scotians covered by Pharmacare and for taxpayers, the province has placed a cap on the price of generic drugs, based on a percentage of the price of the equivalent brand name drug.

Ultimately, the province plans to set the cap at 35 per cent of the cost of the equivalent brand drug. The plan will see that phased in over a year, with the cap going to 45 per cent on July 1, 2011; 40 per cent on January 1, 2012; and 35 per cent on July 1, 2012.

The Fair Drug Prices plan went into effect on July 1, 2011 and Nova Scotians covered by Pharmacare started to see savings in August.

Here are two examples that show what Nova Scotians will pay for two prescription drugs for rheumatoid arthritis and bipolar disorder at each of the three stages, as well as what they paid before July 1, 2011.

Leflunomide (prescribed to treat rheumatoid arthritis)

Before the Fair Drug Prices plan, a Nova Scotia senior paid \$169.57 for a single prescription for 90 day supply of the 20mg version of this drug, under Seniors' Pharmacare.

On July 1, 2011, when the price went to 45 per cent of the price of the brand drug, the same senior paid \$141.57 for the same prescription. On January 1, 2012, when the price moved to 40 per cent, the senior pays \$126.27 for this prescription. On July 1, 2012, the senior will pay \$111.10, when the cap is set at 35 per cent. Once the cap is set at 35 per cent, the senior will pay almost \$60 less for this prescription than they did before the Fair Drug Pricing plan.

Under Seniors' Pharmacare, seniors pay 30 per cent of the total cost each prescription until they reach their annual maximum copayment amount of \$382. Once they reach that amount, they pay nothing for their prescriptions for the rest of the year. The amounts above represent the portion of the prescription paid by the senior, otherwise known as the copayment.

Olanzapine (prescribed to treat bipolar disorder)

Before the Fair Drug Prices plan, under Family Pharmacare, a Nova Scotian paid \$141.55 for a 90 day supply of the 15mg version of this drug.

On July 1, 2011, when the cap was set at 45 per cent of the price of the brand drug, the same person paid \$94.73 for the same prescription. On January 1, 2012, when the cap moves to 40 per cent, this person pays \$84.49 for the prescription. As of July 1, 2012, the person will pay \$74.34, when the cap moves to 35 per cent. Once the cap is in place at 35 per cent, this person will pay almost \$70 less for this prescription than they did before the Fair Drug Pricing plan.

The amounts above represent the copayment paid by people enrolled in Family Pharmacare. Members also pay a deductible, which varies based on income. These copayments assume the deductible for the year has been paid. If the deductible is still outstanding, the person will pay more than the amount above.

A deductible is a specific amount that a family must pay out-of-pocket each year before the Family Pharmacare coverage begins.