



Monday, September 07, 2009

## PHARMACEUTICAL PLAN PREMIUMS

At the Alberta Seniors United Now, Annual General Meeting held on April 22, 2009 the membership passed a motion “to oppose the use of thresholds or premiums for seniors and to recommend the implementation of a no cost pharmaceutical plan”. The motion was passed unanimously.

Under your current plan, coming into effect on July 1, 2010. Low income seniors will receive free prescription drugs; they will not pay a co-payment or premium. Seniors with a slightly higher income will pay a co-payment, but not a premium. Other seniors will pay a co-payment and a monthly premium. The plan is optional, however if you choose to enroll at a later date, there is a three month waiting period.

It is the position of Alberta Seniors United Now that income based premiums creates a two-tier pharmaceutical plan. The implementation of premiums is a form of taxation, imbedded in the health system, which is not acceptable. Health care is a right for all Albertans and in particular seniors. We believe that the pharmaceutical plan should be at no cost for seniors.

Without acknowledging its profound flaws, the Health Minister has now admitted that his original plan would hurt many seniors and did not reflect the reality of current economical conditions. The current plan is also flawed in that it seeks to create two levels of seniors. Seniors without income dependent on the government and seniors with some income who live independent lives. Is it your intent to create all seniors as dependent on the government by taxing those with income until those funds are all gone? Surely targeting and taxing seniors cannot be considered fair and equitable.

We respectfully request that you reconsider and cancel the planned Pharmaceutical Plan premiums. Income should not be an issue within seniors' health programs.

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*United to Ensure Seniors can live in Dignity in the Province of Alberta*