

Communists Call for Nationalization of Pharmaceutical Industry

**Ontario Provincial Executive,
Communist Party of Canada
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The Liberal government in Ontario has launched a campaign to reduce health care costs that won't, in fact, reduce health care costs substantially and will almost certainly increase drug store dispensing fees paid by the public.

That's because the government is solely focused on reducing generic drug companies' kickbacks to drug stores for product placement, while ignoring the multi-national pharmaceutical companies which are the single biggest drain on health care dollars in Ontario and across Canada.

Called 'professional allowances' these kickbacks do add – minimally – to the cost of drugs. But they're just a fly in the ointment compared to the obscene mega-profits rolling in from the price fixing monopoly of the multinational pharmaceutical companies. These roll in year after year on the backs of the sick and the poor in Ontario and globally, because the federal is protecting them, and the provincial government hasn't the will or the desire to take them on.

Rather, the Premier and the Health Minister are taking on pharmacists, with the full knowledge that pharmacists are either employees in chains like Shoppers Drug Mart, or owner operators of small neighbourhood drug stores that likely won't survive the Liberals' pre-election campaign.

If the Liberals really wanted to cut drug and health care costs, they'd go after Big Pharma which is making a 25% profit on the drugs it sells in Ontario – far more than the profits they make on the same drug sales to France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Britain.

Further, to really lower the cost of drugs the Liberals would also have to take on the federal government over their refusal to tighten up on drug patent laws which have allowed the multi-national pharmaceuticals to extend their patent protections – and mega-profits – for years into the future.

But the McGuinty government is prepared to do neither of these things, preferring to campaign against drug store chains and independent pharmacists instead of the real cause of increasing health costs – the obscene profits of the multi-national drug companies.

The Communist Party of Canada (Ontario) calls for the nationalization of the pharmaceutical industry, and the expansion of Medicare to include pharmacare. That

would fundamentally cut health care costs in Ontario by eliminating obscene profiteering, and would provide immediate and long-term health care benefits to all Ontarians. This is the campaign the McGuinty government should mount without further delay.

Further, we call on both the provincial and federal government to take immediate action to rescind current drug patent legislation which protects Big Pharma profits, and to pass legislation to speed up and increase Canadians' access to generic drugs of all types.

Health care is just too important to be left to the profiteers and privatizers like the pharmaceutical industry that is working daily to dismantle universal public health care in Ontario – Medicare in Canada.

Ontarians and all Canadians have shown they are willing to fight to protect and expand Medicare. What's missing – and so obviously missing with the government's cynical pre-election campaign against pharmacists today – is the political will to take on the real threat to Medicare – the multi-national pharmaceutical companies and their boundless greed. Could it be related to political contributions to the Liberal and Tory parties from pharmaceutical companies in Ontario?

If a little country like Cuba can do it, surely the governments of Ontario and Canada can do it.

The health of Ontarians and all Canadians depends on it.