



# Q & A Client Fact Sheet: The *Pharmacare Act*

**Purpose:** This fact sheet offers an overview of the *Pharmacare Act* and any potential impact on First Nations' people on Turtle Island. It outlines the benefits, challenges, and opportunities of the *Pharmacare Act* for First Nations.

## What is the *Pharmacare Act*?

The *Pharmacare Act* was passed on October 10, 2024. It outlines the foundational principles for national universal pharmacare in Canada and the federal government's intention to work with provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples, partners and stakeholders to collaborate on a step-by-step approach towards national pharmacare.

The Act sets out the next steps that the Government of Canada will take, starting with making a range of contraception and diabetes medications free.

In addition, the Government is setting up a fund for diabetes devices and supplies (e.g., syringes, glucose test strips) to help people manage and monitor their diabetes and administer their medication.

Further information on the details of this new coverage will be made available after the Government of Canada signs agreements with willing provinces and territories.

## How does the *Pharmacare Act* affect me as a First Nation client?

For registered (status) First Nations people, the *Pharmacare Act* will not change your coverage for medications under [Indigenous Services Canada's \(ISC\) – Non-Insured Health Benefits \(NIHB\) Program](#). You should continue to access coverage for eligible benefits, including diabetes medications and contraceptives, through NIHB.

For those not already covered under NIHB, such as non-status First Nations, the legislation aims to support greater access to medications, starting with free access to a range of contraception and diabetes medications.

## What medications will be covered ?

For those not already covered under NIHB, such as non-status First Nations, the *Pharmacare Act* will support free access for residents from participating jurisdictions to a range of contraception and diabetes medications.

Registered (status) First Nations should continue to access coverage for diabetes medications and contraceptive treatments through the NIHB Program.



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### **What if my medication is not covered under the Pharmacare Act and who can I contact for help?**

For non-status First Nations clients, the Act aims to support greater access to medications, starting with free access to a range of contraception and diabetes medications. In addition to this, there will also be a fund set up to help people access diabetes devices and supplies (e.g., syringes, glucose test strips).

The inclusion of other drugs will be determined in the future, based on information and lessons learned from implementing the Act as well as initiatives outside of the Act (i.e., National Strategy for Drugs for Rare Diseases and the Improving Affordable Access to Prescription Drugs initiative with Prince Edward Island).

### **Are there any costs involved?**

Medications covered by jurisdictions participating in national pharmacare will be available for free at the pharmacy counter. The full drug cost and any fees would be paid for publicly without the need to coordinate benefits with private plans.

### **What are some potential challenges or barriers to implement the *Pharmacare Act* for First Nations people?**

AFN identified challenges including historical mistrust of the federal government's healthcare, poor communications with First Nations, and inadequate culturally sensitive healthcare services.