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DENTAL CARE



In May 2024, letters of invitation were discontinued. The CDCP application process was shifted online to Canada.ca/dental. At the same time, the program was further expanded to seniors 65 to 69.

In October 2022, children under 12 were eligible to apply for the “Canada Dental Benefit” through the Canada Revenue Agency portal.

In December 2023, the dental care program was opened up to seniors 87 and over; in January 2024 to those 77 to 86; in February 2024 to those 72 to 76; and in March 2024 to those 70 and 71. Letters were sent to individuals in these age groups inviting them to apply to the “Canadian Dental Care Plan” administered through Sun Life — as opposed to the CRA portal.

In June, persons with a valid Disability Tax Credit certificate as well as children under 18 became eligible to apply to the CDCP.

All remaining eligible Canadian residents between the ages of 18 and 64 will be able to apply online to the CDCP starting in 2025. Those who originally received their benefits through the CRA — children under 12 — must now be registered at Canada.ca/dental.

To be eligible for the CDCP, applicants must have a household adjusted net income below \$90,000, have filed their 2023 taxes, have received their notice of

assessment, and be without private dental insurance.

While the application process for the CDCP is now online at Canada.ca/dental, you can also register by phone (1-833-537-4342) or at a Service Canada centre. In all cases you will need your SIN number, your spouse or common law partner's SIN number (if applicable) and the names of any other government programs that cover some of your dental costs.

The CDCP covers a wide range of services at approved fee rates such as regular cleanings, check ups and x-rays. The plan also covers basic restorative procedures — fillings, root canals and extractions — and more advanced procedures. It is advisable to check in advance whether your oral health provider of choice is participating in the CDCP and how their fee rates may differ from the fee rates approved under the program.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office.

PHARMACARE



The government continues to deliver \$200 billion, over ten years, to the provinces and territories for

healthcare. However, recognizing that affordable medicines are key to relieving pressure on family budgets and ensuring a healthier population, the government has recently introduced legislation to create a universal, single-payer national pharmacare program. Bill C-64 will give the federal Minister of Health the power to enter into agreements with provinces and territories to improve the affordability of pharmacare

products, beginning with contraceptives and diabetes medications. Separately, the government has announced its intention to establish a fund to support access to diabetes devices and supplies. To take advantage of the savings to governments that come from buying in bulk, Bill C-64 will lead to a national bulk purchasing strategy for prescription drugs and related products.

FOREIGN CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION IN HEALTHCARE

We know that Canada is facing an acute labour shortage, and healthcare is one area where a shortage of specialized labour is having a direct impact on Canadians' lives.

Clearly, we must do all we can to facilitate the entry into our healthcare system of those who can contribute to filling the system's human resource needs.

Many who want to make Canada their home possess the education, skills and experience that could enable them to work in our healthcare system. Often, all they need is the opportunity to align the training they have received abroad with the certification requirements of the professional orders.

Professional orders fall under provincial jurisdiction and are governed by provincial laws. The federal government, however, is intent on doing what it can to help remove barriers to foreign

credential recognition for healthcare workers.

In October 2023, the federal minister of health along with the health ministers of the provinces and territories committed to streamlining foreign credential recognition so that healthcare professionals from abroad can get to work in Canada more quickly.

In January 2024, Ottawa announced an extra \$86 million for its Foreign Credentials Recognition Program to support 15 projects to facilitate the recognition of the foreign credentials of 6,600 internationally educated healthcare professionals. Funded projects will focus on simplifying the steps in credential recognition, providing internationally educated healthcare professionals with relevant Canadian work experience, and offering those working toward recognition of their credentials various support services.



Budget 2024 announced a further \$77.1 million over four years to integrate internationally educated healthcare professionals into the Canadian healthcare system.

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