



For Immediate Release
December 8, 2015

Doctors challenge B.C. government to take action on ADHD

VANCOUVER – British Columbia is far behind the rest of Canada when it comes to providing a full range of treatments for individuals with ADHD, and the provincial government’s inaction is having wide-ranging social and financial impacts.

ADHD is a mental illness, one of the most common – and most commonly misunderstood – in Canada. The disorder impacts one to two children in every Canadian classroom and one out of every twenty-five employees. Contrary to popular belief, ADHD is not a benign disorder with consequences that children eventually outgrow.

Left untreated, children with ADHD are at higher risk for lower levels of academic achievement, grade repetition, placement in special education, and dropping out of high-school. In addition, they grow up to experience more mental illnesses and health care issues, including higher rates of addiction, anxiety, depression, and smoking, all of which have significant socioeconomic impacts.

While treatment for ADHD should always be multimodal, medication can be an important component for both children and adults with ADHD. However, like most mental health conditions, medication treatment for ADHD is not a one size-fits-all scenario. The widest possible range of medication treatment options allows for the best outcome. And yet, B.C. is one of the only provinces that does not cover a variety of Long-Acting medications under PharmaCare – a critical error on the Ministry’s part. Currently, Ritalin and Dexedrine are the only medications for the treatment of individuals with ADHD fully covered by BC PharmaCare. Concerta is the only long-acting medication that is covered, and it is restricted to Special Authority Request (only for the paediatric population and only after failing on Ritalin or Dexedrine).

Long-acting medications are better tolerated, having fewer side effects, greater effectiveness, less abuse potential, and improved adherence. Therefore they are currently the most widely prescribed ADHD medications and are listed as the first-line medication treatment option by the Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines.

CADDRA (Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance), an alliance of health care professionals working in the field of ADHD, B.C physicians, and CADDAC (Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada), a national ADHD awareness and advocacy organization, are calling on the B.C. government to take immediate action to provide coverage for all long-acting medications

for all age groups. This month, physicians across the province have begun advocacy efforts to deliver the message that the status quo is not good enough. Any BC physician interested in this issue is encouraged to access information on either organization's web site.

“Simply put, decisions about the treatment of children, adolescents and adults with mental illness should be placed in the hands of the doctor, the parent, or the patient. Currently, the B.C. government is making those decisions for us by not only severely limiting our treatment options, but by excluding some of the very best of those options.”
– CADDRA

Learn More:

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