

**Community chain pharmacy applauds Health Ministers' progress
Right focus on most critical health issues**

VICTORIA, B.C., October 24, 2005 – The Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores (CACDS) commends the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Health for their progress on a number of critical health issues, as reported from their annual meeting.

“The Ministers are focusing on the issues that are of paramount importance to the goals of improving Canadians’ access to health care and of improving health outcomes,” says Christina Bisanz, president and CEO of the CACDS, from the association’s annual conference which has brought together more than 500 leaders from Canada’s community chain pharmacies and their supplier partners.

“Many of the areas addressed by the Ministers are consistent with the priorities of CACDS and its retail and supplier members who are all exploring ways to shorten the distance to achieving improved health outcomes,” she added.

CACDS commends the Ministers for acknowledging the need for collaborative pan-Canadian approaches to achieve consistencies, where appropriate. In particular, CACDS is pleased to see:

- Commitment to the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy and in particular accelerating work on catastrophic drug coverage and furthering research into rare disease drugs. CACDS looks forward to hearing more detail about the expansion of the Common Drug Review (CDR) and progress toward a common national formulary. Regarding the added responsibility of the PMPRB for monitoring and reporting on non-patented drugs, CACDS looks forward to an extensive and meaningful consultation with the PMPRB at the earliest opportunity.
- Recognition of the critical need for pandemic flu planning and emergency preparedness. CACDS retail and supplier members are interested in collaborating with governments to ensure their effective supply chain can be utilized for emergency response and pandemic planning;
- A collaborative, national approach involving federal, provincial and territorial governments and key health, education and justice stakeholders to addressing methamphetamine. CACDS worked with NDMAC to develop Meth Watch, a education program designed to prevent retail diversion of methamphetamine precursor ingredients and is exploring other options to support governments in addressing this serious health issue.
- A Framework for Collaborative Pan-Canadian Health Human Resources Planning. CACDS is working nationally to address the pharmacist shortage and welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with governments to address the issue

CACDS is the national voice for community chain pharmacy in Canada . Its twenty-two retail member companies, traditional drug stores and grocery and mass merchandisers with pharmacies represent over 75% of the nation’s community drugstores through more than 5,000 pharmacies which fill 78 per cent of the nation’s prescriptions.

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