

February 29, 2024 | Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

Health Advocate Applauds Federal Government in Free Access to Contraceptives for Canadians

OTTAWA, ON: The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist of Canada (SOGC) applauds the Canadian government on today's historic announcement to include free access for prescription contraceptives as part of a National Framework for Pharmacare.

This announcement begins a generational shift across Canada in terms of access and the future of women's health care at large. Access to contraception is not only a matter of reproductive rights but also a fundamental aspect of public health and equity.

As a national voice for women's health and rights, the SOGC has been advocating for coverage for a full range of contraceptive options, including: the pill; the patch; the ring; IUDs; the shot and the implant. By removing the financial barriers to all contraceptives, women will have the tools to better control their futures and as a result, improve economic prosperity for the country. Investment in a program that provides universal access to contraception is an investment in Canada's future.

The direct cost of unintended pregnancy in Canada is estimated to be at least \$320 million and does not factor in the downstream costs to the individual, their community or society. Women spend approximately 35 years of their lives in their childbearing years. A woman planning to have two children will spend five years on average trying to conceive, being pregnant and then breastfeeding. This means that Canadian women spend 30 years of their lives, on average, incurring the associated costs of trying to avoid a pregnancy.

The SOGC also wishes to applaud the efforts of the New Democratic Party as part of their Supply and Confidence Agreement with the federal government and their commitment to pharmacare in Canada.

"The SOGC is pleased with today's announcement from the federal government and its commitment to women's health care in Canada. This policy will help ensure that women are empowered with the tools to better control their futures including family planning, educational pursuits and workforce entry and re-entry. By ensuring coverage for all contraceptives, we are taking significant steps towards a healthier and more equitable future for all Canadians." – Dr. Amanda Black, President of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

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