



INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION CANADA

180 - 111 Victoria Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 4C4. (604) 254-8141 Fax (604) 254-8183 E-Mail: officers@ilwu.ca

LCEB BULLETIN

Discussion on Generic and Brand-name Drugs

May 8, 2015

Prescription drug prices continue to rise resulting in negative effects on our extended health benefits. If our Plan wants to maintain and improve benefits we must find ways to make our benefit dollars go further.

The Plan has mandated this year that whenever possible, we use generic drugs instead of the more expensive brand-name drugs, a practice which is now common with most provincial government plans.

How will this change affect you? The changes should be little and transparent, and your prescription will still be filled with the medicine your doctor prescribed. You may already be receiving generic drugs so there will be no change.

- Your drug card will tell the pharmacist that your Plan will only pay for the low-cost alternative (LCA) if one is available. If the drug prescribed has a generic equivalent, your pharmacist can dispense that product. Be sure to discuss this with your pharmacist prior to the filling of your prescription
- If for whatever reason you want the brand-name drug, you will have to pay the difference. Your Physician can agree to give you a “no substitution” on the prescription, and if approved by PharmaCare, you will get the brand name at the full price.

Brand-name drugs: When a pharmaceutical company develops a new drug, they apply to a government office for a patent. This gives the company the right to sell the drug without competition, usually for a period of 20 years from registration.

Generic drugs: After the patent expires, pharmaceutical companies can then manufacture and sell the original drug as generic. The generic drug must contain the same medicinal ingredient(s), and meet the same standards set by the Health Protection Branch of the federal government. Generic drugs on average cost between 40% and 50% less. The quality, effectiveness and safety is identical as the brand-name drug.

Brand-name drugs at generic prices: After the patent expires, other manufacturers can enter the market with a generic version of the formerly protected drug. While 40% of prescriptions in Canada are filled with generic drugs, about 60% have no generic equivalent. Our Plan will continue to pay for the brand-name drug when there is no generic equivalent.

Waterfront Industry Pension Plan Trustees

Barry Campbell, Pensioner Representative

Bob Dhaliwal, ILWU Canada

Mark Gordienko, ILWU Canada

Brett Hartley, Local 508