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Ontario Youth Drug Program: An Important Step Forward Towards Universal Access to Medications for All

On April 27th, 2017 the Ontario Government announced its 2017 budget, A Stronger, Healthier Ontario. The budget contained various points of interest for members of the asthma community, such as significant investments in health care, which includes a \$345 million dollar increase in hospital funding, and an overall \$7 billion increase in health care funding over the next three years.

The most significant initiative for the asthma community announced in this budget, is the Government's introduction of free prescription drug coverage for all Ontario children and adults younger than 25, regardless of family and individual income. This policy, the first of its kind in Canada, will make life more affordable for Ontario families and ensure that young adults have access to the drugs they need, ensuring that they never have to choose between paying for their medication over other necessities.

"The newly proposed Ontario youth drug program is an important step towards delivering much needed care for children and families living with asthma. We hope this new program will continue the broader discussion for the need for universal access to medicines in this country, so that all Canadians have access to the medication they need", says Vanessa Foran, President & CEO of the Asthma Society of Canada. "No Canadian should have to sacrifice their health because of an inability to afford their prescribed medications."

Access to Medicines is a key policy priority for the Asthma Society of Canada, believing that all Canadians should have equitable and timely access to prescription medications based on the best possible health outcomes, rather than ability to pay.

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