

HANDBOOK FOR PARTICIPANTS Canadian Health Coalition Lobby (2019)



Introduction

The Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) is holding its annual lobby on Parliament Hill on January 28-29, 2019. We look forward to having public health care advocates from across Canada join us in Ottawa. This year we'll be lobbying Members of Parliament (MPs) about pharmacare.

Did you know that Canada is the only country in the world with a universal public health care system that doesn't include access to prescription medication? Too many of us are struggling to pay for prescriptions. With the federal election scheduled for 2019, momentum is building to create a fair and affordable National Public Drug Plan. It's the ideal time to lobby MPs and Senators for federal leadership and concrete actions on this issue.

Registration

Everyone planning to participate in the lobby should fill out the registration form by November 13, 2018:
<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ef09br3749535655&llr=4drzjstab>

Since MPs often only accept to meet only if a constituent is present, we need representation from as many ridings as possible. That will help ensure that everyone travelling to Ottawa has the opportunity to

meet with at least one elected official.

We will contact all the selected participants by **November 20, 2018**. If need be, we'll create a waiting list and contact interested participants if spaces become available.

Participants should make their travel arrangements promptly after receiving their welcome package. **Please let us know by December 28, 2018 if you can no longer commit to attending the lobby.** This event is built around the participants. Your commitment is therefore essential to making it a success every year.

Schedule

Participants must be available in Ottawa from 1pm on Monday, January 28 to 6pm on Tuesday, January 29. The detailed schedule for Tuesday will be handed out at the mandatory lobby training on Monday evening.

Monday, January 28, 2019 (Lord Elgin Hotel, Pearson Room)

1pm - 4pm: Conference on pharmacare
6pm - 9pm: Mandatory lobby training and practice session

Tuesday, January 29, 2019 (various locations on Parliament Hill)

9am - 6pm: Lobby on Parliament Hill, debrief and additional activities including (depending on your assigned schedule):

- Workshop
- Question Period
- Photo op

6pm - 7pm: Non-mandatory closing event (TBA)





Accommodation

We encourage you to reserve a room at the Lord Elgin Hotel. This will allow us to get a better rate for the rental of the space. We have bedrooms blocked at a reduced rate of \$189/night. You can make your room reservations **until December 28** by phone (1-800-267-4298) or by email (groups@lordelgin.ca). Mention the "Canadian Health Coalition" group rate.

After December 28, we can't guarantee that rooms or the rate will be available.

Individual reservations may be cancelled or modified without penalty until 7 days prior to the date of arrival. If a reservation is cancelled within 7 days of arrival or in the event of a no show, the Lord Elgin will charge the full price of the reservation. Any modifications made within 7 days of arrival that shorten the length of stay will result in the full charge.

The Lord Elgin Hotel is located at 100 Elgin St., right near Parliament Hill. This is also where we'll be holding the conference and the lobby training, so it's a perfect option for those wishing to be close to all the action!

Meals will not be provided by the CHC.



Expectations

Fixed lobby groups will be organized by the CHC. For security reasons, we must confirm the names of all attendees for each meeting ahead of time through the MP's office. Last minute changes may impact the other group members and we may not be able to accommodate them.

Please let us know by December 28 if you can no longer commit to being available on January 28 and 29. We understand that unexpected events can happen. The earlier you let the Lobby Coordinator know about unanticipated changes to your availability, the more likely we'll be able to adapt.

The CHC commits to booking at least one meeting for each lobbyist, but we can't control cancellations made by the MP's office. Parliament is a busy and sometimes unpredictable place. An important caucus meeting or a vote can be called at any time and take precedence over a scheduled meeting. Therefore, we can't guarantee that you will have a meeting with an MP.

- For last minute meeting cancellations, we will do our best to try to schedule an alternate meeting for you. There will also be other interesting activities to participate in throughout the day.
- In the event of a major parliamentary event (e.g. budget announcement) or schedule change (e.g. prorogation) that is out of our control, the CHC commits to providing participants with an alternate activity.

All material for the lobby will be provided by the CHC, including the "leave-behind kit" for MPs and Senators.

The CHC will follow up with every MP and Senator after the lobby based on the meeting report we receive from participants. We may contact participants after the lobby if we need clarification about the content of a report.

The success of this CHC event lies in working with our allies to include a variety of voices. We encourage lobbyists to talk to their peers about their experience and write about it in bulletins, on social media, etc. We can provide you with guidelines and tips if you'd like to share your opinion with your local newspaper by submitting a letter to the editor or an op-ed. If you'll be mentioning the lobby or the MP(s) you met during the lobby, we'd appreciate getting to review the material before you share it with journalists or media outlets.



Preparation

We will be explaining the detailed material in your “lobby kit” and in the “leave behind” kit for MPs and Senators at the mandatory lobby training. As further preparation, we recommend reading our web page on pharmacare: <http://healthcoalition.ca/national-public-drug-plan/>

There is no dress code for this event. Members of Parliament will likely be dressed in business attire. Most of our advocates dress in business casual attire. Comfortable footwear is recommended.

While all the meetings are indoors, Parliament Hill is composed of several buildings that are spread out over a few city blocks. You will likely walk outside from one building to another. Bear in mind that late January can be chilly in Ottawa.

You will go through airport-style security several times during the day. You’ll have to remove your jacket, belt, jewellery, etc. and have your bags scanned more than once. We recommend dressing accordingly on Tuesday.

You must present Parliament Hill security with **a piece of government-issued ID** every time you enter a building. If you don’t have one with you, you won’t be able to participate.

Effective Advocacy

MPs’ jobs depend on a keen awareness of their constituents since even a slight change in public opinion could signal defeat in the next election. Your MP relies on you (the voter) to keep him/her informed. You are the expert.

Ongoing communication is an effective way to let your MP know and understand how you feel about issues that are important to you. MPs must also be kept informed since they talk to Ministers and other MPs in caucus, and they can influence parties’ positions. This is particularly important in light of the upcoming federal election.

Participating in the lobby as a health care advocate gives you the chance to have your voice heard in Ottawa. But most importantly, we want you to have fun and enjoy the experience!

Contact Information

Please contact the CHC Lobby Coordinator if you have any questions:

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