



# Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association

**February 29, 2024**

**Statement: Alberta Government Opting Out of the Pharmacare Deal for Diabetes Medication**

The Alberta government has said they will opt out of the federal NDP and Liberal parties' announcement to provide Canadians free coverage for diabetes medication. It is inconceivable that our provincial government would refuse Albertans the same benefit as all Canadians. The Alberta government must rethink the needs of Albertans and provide them with diabetes medication health insurance coverage when the federal program is available.

The cost and access are barriers, regardless of the Alberta government claiming the vast majority of Albertans have health insurance:

- [16.8% of Albertan woman and 18.3% of men do not have a government, employer or association insurance plan.](#)
- [26% of Albertans have type 1, type 2 diagnosed, type 2 undiagnosed or prediabetes.](#)
- [The costs are:](#)
  - \$514 million directly to the health care system.
  - \$78-\$6,557 for individuals with type 1.
  - \$76-\$5,641 for individuals with type 2.
- People with diabetes are over three times more likely to be hospitalized with cardiovascular disease, 12 times more likely to be hospitalized with end-stage renal disease, and almost 20 times more likely to be hospitalized for a nontraumatic lower limb amputation compared to the general population.

People with diabetes can have a shorter life expectancy of five to 15 years. It can contribute to 30% of strokes, 40% of heart attacks, 50% of kidney failure and 70% of non-traumatic leg and foot amputations. It is the leading cause of blindness.

The Alberta government's naïve and premature plan to opt out of the program without even reviewing it speaks to their willingness to prioritize politics over the lives of Albertans.