

Law Amendments Committee  
RE: Bill 17

To the Law Amendments Committee,

I, Rick Theriault, am a pharmacist and owner of Saulnierville Pharmacy, for 23 years. Saulnierville is a small community in the Municipality of Clare, a three hour drive, and I am driving back tonight because I must work tomorrow morning.

Saulnierville Pharmacy, along with many rural pharmacies, is the most visible and therefore the most easily accessible face of healthcare service in the community. We have three full-time pharmacists whose wages are \$60,000-\$80,000/year and one part-time pharmacist on the payroll with another full-time about to join us. Pharmacists are highly paid professionals.

Because we are so easily accessible, we carry a huge workload. Our customers depend on us for a lot of their problems, many outside of our field of practice. With the added Doctor shortage on top of everything else, the demands on us are to the extreme.

Our duties, besides a regular pharmacist's role are everything from wound care, foot care, handling Pharmacare enrolment issues, blood pressure, glucose checking, bereavement counselling, allergic reactions, palliative care assistance and other healthcare issues just to name some. All of which we are not paid for.

We are expected to do medication reviews, but without sufficient compensation. It just barely covers our pharmacist's wages to do it, and very time consuming, but it doesn't cover any other expenses.

We also have a Registered Nurse on staff for servicing our customers, helping with cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure and other health issues. There is also a dietician on hand, to help those customers not only with weight issues, but also their various medical conditions. These are all things that are free services. Try to charge for them you might ask – how can you in a small depressed community.

Saulnierville Pharmacy also provides our community with 24 hour emergency service. We are also there for our many nursing homes after hours and for all their pharmacy needs including on site assistance. Our involvement with the nursing homes is business but very low margins.

We also support many organizations and events in our community. From Seniors Fun Days, which is a monthly outing for them, plus a meal. School meal programs, sports teams, a home for the disabled. Also, we do workshops, lectures etc. which carries a cost of preparation and presentation, time of a pharmacist, hall rental etc.; whatever is called upon us, we are there. These are just a few.

It should be mentioned, we employ 26 people, support our local radio station, and we try to keep our business locally.

Expenses, especially wages, electricity, fuel, insurances, etc., are out of control.

Our main revenue comes from prescriptions. Currently, we are getting \$10.62 from Pharmacare for a prescription which the actual cost of dispensing is at least \$3.00 to \$4.00 more per prescription, which barely covers our dispensing cost. What our government is proposing would take another \$3.00-\$4.00 off a prescription. What's even worse is whatever you allow to happen here, all the other insurance companies will follow. For Saulnierville

Pharmacy, this could possibly represent a \$320,000 loss. There is no small business around today that could survive this type of impact. A lot of things at Saulnierville Pharmacy would have to change. The obvious would be cuts to staff, hours and services; in some small areas in Nova Scotia, pharmacy closures. Who suffers out of this, our customers, your taxpayers. The result is an astonishing increase to the burden to our already overstressed healthcare system; Doctors, hospitals, ER's and ultimately Nova Scotian's health.

Speaking of Doctors, they now use a computer software program in their practice that enables them to be paid for just about every little procedure they do.

Now for a new situation we are now faced with:

As you all may be aware of, as the public are:

- The Government/ Department of Health want us to prescribe e.g., to write a prescription for Mrs. Smith
    - As was announced by our government in a news release....O.K...
  - The Government/Department of Health want us to give injections, e.g. Mrs. Smith's flu shot
    - As was announced by our government in a news release....O.K....
- Because of these news releases, the public, those in need of these types of services are impatiently waiting.

So now, before my pharmacy and pharmacists start these new services, we have things to do. I need to make a proper counselling area, as required, and the training of our pharmacists, which both come at a high cost. Plus the addition of my new pharmacist, so we can have someone to dedicate their time for these and other new services down the road.

- SO
- I will not be paid for performing these services....makes financial sense?
  - What would a Doctor do in this situation??
  - We all know that answer...
  - How would the medical society react to this?
  - What would you do?

And on top of that, our Government is expecting me to take a huge financial hit while we are already being reimbursed at a below cost dispensing fee.

Here are examples of some costs related only to our dispensary, which represent 80% of our total revenue...

- Pharmacists = \$340,000/yr
- Tech wages = \$120,000/yr
- Training and refresher courses = \$19,000/yr
- Nursing Home packaging unit = \$280,000 (still making payments)
- Heat and lights = \$18,000/yr
- Dues and licenses = \$24,000/yr

Maybe it's now time for all pharmacies to tell Mrs. Smith that we can't help her with her problem of the day because the Government took monies away from us and we can't afford to give up our pharmacist's time.

Pharmacies, especially the independents, cannot continue on the road that our government is taking us. They, you, have to take some responsibility, to straighten out this very slippery road you are taking us.

We need the Government to delay the passing of Bill 17. Pharmacies need to have a new agreement in place on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 before this next step is taken by the Government. We

need an increase in our fees, to be paid for cognitive services, e.g. Prescribing, changes to Doctor's orders, counselling, to name a few. We need to be compensated to survive. Please don't put the buggy before the horse.

I understand the government needs to save money, get the best bang for your buck. Work with us, PANS (Pharmacy Association of N.S.) and we will work with you, and show you how we can save you money. You worked with us before, so why not now. It seems as though you asked everyone else, except us, for their opinion on this matter.

Saulnierville is not in an urban setting, where you have all the big box stores, with pharmacies and big profits. Most of them can and do operate their pharmacies at a loss. Also, in the cities, the residents have access to so many more health services than we do, E.g. ER's, walk-in clinics, recreation facilities, etc...

I am here tonight because I am really scared what the Government is about to do to my business; a business I have dedicated most of my life to and to the residents of Clare.

Any of you on this committee, I hope there are some, that come from a small community, will know what I mean by the value that community pharmacy really means, and is necessary to a healthy community.

Treat us the way healthcare professionals should be treated. We cannot be expected to work for free, or at a loss, anyone here at this meeting should agree. I'm sure none of you would.

Work with us and we will work with you. You do with the doctors and they are right behind us on the list of healthcare expenses.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'P' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

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**SPRY-SAULNIERVILLE PHARMACHOICE,** Bill to:  
9999 HWY # 1 Z0772 - SPRYCEL DISTRIBUTION - INVOICE  
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Order 5120780 details:  
Courier: PUROLATOR (S)  
Ordered: 7 Apr, 2011  
Delivery: 13 Apr, 2011 1700-  
Map: B0W  
Pt#: 614450

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ATTN: RICK-PHARMACY.

\*\*\*\*\* X 2 DAY RUN PUROLATOR \*\*\*\*\*

Ordered	U/M	Code	Description	Z0772
30	EA	DD5516	DRG DISTI SPRYCEL 100MG 30/BTL	4461.60
1	EA	K60015	SERVICE Delivery No Charge	0.00

*04/13/11 RL*  
*A-267*

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2 Items(s)

**Order# 5120780**

No. of Pieces: 0

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**13 Apr, 2011**

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