



For immediate release

Generic Drugs Now Fill Majority of Canadian Prescriptions

Generic medications filled 51.6% of all prescriptions for only 23% of \$21.4-billion Canadians spent on Prescription Drugs in 2008

Toronto, March 26, 2009 – For the first time in Canadian history, generic medicines now fill the majority of prescriptions in Canada.

According to sales data released today by IMS Health Canada, the world leader in prescription drug sales information, generic drugs were dispensed to fill 51.6 percent of all prescriptions in Canada in 2008 yet accounted for only 23 percent of the \$21.4-billion spent on prescription medicines.

“The savings provided by lower-cost generic medicines has never been more important to Canada’s health-care system and its economy,” said Jim Keon, President of the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association (CGPA). “Given the current economic crisis, it is becoming increasingly important for Canadian governments, taxpayers, businesses and patients to maximize their use of generic prescription medicines in order to make public and employer-sponsored drug benefit plans affordable and sustainable.”

Quick facts about generics prescription medicines in Canada

- In 2008, the use of generic prescription drugs saved Canada’s health-care system approximately \$3-billion
- The average price of a brand-name prescription in Canada is \$64.19 while the average price of a generic prescription is \$26.07
- In the United States, generic drugs are dispensed to fill 69 percent of all prescriptions. If the use of generic drugs in Canada increased to levels in the United States, it would save Canada’s health-care system an additional \$900-million in the first year alone.
- Approved by Health Canada, generic drugs are as safe and effective as their brand-name counterparts. Generic drugs are identical or “bioequivalent” to a brand-name drug in safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics and intended use.
- Unlike the majority of brand-name drugs, which are shipped into Canada, the majority of generic drugs sold in Canada are made right here, helping to support jobs, R&D spending and manufacturing facilities in Canada.

“Along with providing significant savings for governments, businesses, unions and patients, a dollar spent on a generic drug results in more jobs, more R&D spending and supports more manufacturing in Canada than a dollar spent on a brand-name drug,” Keon said.

About the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association

The Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association (CGPA) represents Canada’s generic drug industry – a dynamic group of companies that specialize in the production of high quality, affordable generic drugs and fine chemicals and in conducting the clinical trials required for government approval of generic drugs. The industry plays an important role in controlling health-care costs in Canada. Generic drugs are dispensed to fill 51.6 per cent of all prescriptions but account for only 23 per cent of the \$21.4-billion Canadians spend annually on prescription medicines.

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