

Ontario's Bill 102 & Physician Stakeholders



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Bill 102, the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act, is the Ontario Government's attempt to control drug costs and ensure patient access to drugs. In earlier debates about the Bill, pharmacists were able to make substantial changes to pricing initiatives to help maintain their margin/profitability. However, physicians, our key stakeholders, do not seem to be deeply involved in the discussion. To get an understanding of their current attitudes, Prism Healthcare Intelligence recently checked the pulse of physicians in Ontario.

This survey was completed in August 2006 by 300 Ontario-based physicians across a variety of specialties. Overall, only 26% of physicians were aware of the Bill and only 18% of those supported its current content. Those that did support the Bill were primarily specialists.

In general, the Bill does not seem to generate any specific benefits for physicians. Not surprisingly, physicians felt that pharmaceutical companies will be most negatively affected by this Bill (Table 1). As for cost containment options, there is no clear winner, but therapeutic substitution is their least favourite (Table 2).

Clearly, the 22,000 physicians of Ontario have some serious concerns about this new legislation and would probably have even greater concerns if they were made more aware of its potential impact. If they are not involved in the debate, how and when will this happen?

As Jacques Lefebvre, spokesperson for Rx&D states, "Upon reading the poll, it's quite alarming that physicians, the cornerstone of health-care delivery in our system, are still unaware of the legislation. In moving forward, the McGuinty government must ensure that the impact of this legislation on patient care and the economy are both fully understood."

As Bill 102 continues to evolve and get kicked around in the court of public opinion, it is certain that no product manager has determined the final worst case scenario on their excel spreadsheet! **CPM**

Table 1

Stakeholders to be affected by Bill 102

	Negatively	Positively
Patients	66%	34%
Pharmacists	71%	29%
Physicians	65%	35%
Pharma companies	75%	25%

Table 2

Support for various drug coverage options

	Yes	No
Therapeutic substitution	44%	56%
Brand substitution	50%	50%
Reference-based pricing	55%	45%

Prism Healthcare Intelligence is a full service market research agency providing online surveys and qualitative insights for the pharmaceutical industry. For more information, please contact us at (905) 415-1940 or visit www.prismresearch.ca