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# Drug Coverage on the Internet

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Dan Rego,  
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“Market access has become a major focus with pharmaceutical companies and a big part of market access is informing healthcare professionals and patients about the coverage available for a medication through the various payers in the country and then facilitating making a claim for coverage of that medication, especially if it is a special authorization type medication,” said Dan Rego, Founder of Plasmid Biocommunications Inc., the company that produces the websites [www.DrugCoverage.ca](http://www.DrugCoverage.ca) and [www.DrugCoverage.org](http://www.DrugCoverage.org).

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For medications listed in [DrugCoverage.org](http://DrugCoverage.org), the website provides a comprehensive resource which allows users to create a claim for coverage through any private insurer, provincial/territorial drug benefit program or federal drug plan. It provides plan by plan information on specific coverage criteria for the medication, provides the appropriate claim form or letter writing guide to make prior authorization or special authorization claims and gives instructions on submitting the claim. “We designed the website to be an alternative to the call centre based, patent support programs offered by many pharmaceutical companies for their more expensive medications,” explained Rego. “Actually a lot of our clients have both—the [DrugCoverage.org](http://DrugCoverage.org) website and a toll-free, call centre based patient assistance program. We can work adjunctively with these programs. Also, because of the relatively low cost of providing this web-based resource, we are seeing business from brands that are not that expensive but still have reimbursement issues, where these websites are the perfect way to manage reimbursement.” The sites are easy to find on the Internet as they are search engine optimized. Searching for “coverage” or “reimbursement” for any medication that is listed on the [DrugCoverage](http://DrugCoverage) websites, using Google or any other search engine,

usually gives that medication’s [DrugCoverage](http://DrugCoverage) website as a top search result.

The other website, [DrugCoverage.ca](http://DrugCoverage.ca), was first introduced in 2004. It is a guide to reimbursement and is used by patients, caregivers and health professionals. This site is more geared to the general public and explains the different drug plans and programs Canadians have access to. Who is eligible for the drug plan? What drugs are covered? How do you get coverage for a drug that is not on the drug plan’s formulary? What do you do if a claim for a medication is rejected? How do you ask your employer to cover a medication that is not covered by your company drug plan? All these questions are answered plus there is a lot of additional information regarding drug coverage. Numerous patient groups, foundations, disease societies, governments and other organizations link to [DrugCoverage.ca](http://DrugCoverage.ca), from their own websites, as a resource for coverage information. Plasmid works with many patient groups, hospital access coordinators and other health professionals on reimbursement education and access related topics.

Plasmid currently works with 40 different pharmaceutical brands. What started out as a small consulting company in late 2001 is quickly growing and gaining recognition. In April of this year, Shoppers Drug Mart Inc. purchased Plasmid from Rego and equity partner Virginia Hutton. Plasmid is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Shoppers Drug Mart. The company’s business has not changed since the purchase and all the original staff remain. One new development will be the introduction of a new reimbursement/coverage summary page on [DrugCoverage.ca](http://DrugCoverage.ca) where all pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors will be able to post drug coverage information about their medications. There will be no cost to the manufacturer to post this information and the service will be available in November of this year. The goal is to be able to provide detailed coverage information for as many medications as possible on the website. Rego concludes, “there is a lot more we can offer our clients now that we are a part of Shoppers and their adjacent businesses—the next couple of years are really going to be exciting.” **CPM**