Advocacy Strategies in Reproductive Healthcare: An Analysis of Universal No-Cost Contraception Campaigns

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Objective

Analyze the landscape of contraceptive coverage and advocacy strategies utilized by no-cost contraceptive campaigns across Canada, clinician involvement, and effect(s) on public policy.

Method

The landscape of contraceptive coverage was extracted from government websites. Grassroots nocost contraceptive campaigns across Canada were located through a Google News search utilizing region name and keywords in English and French equivalent, "free contraception campaign", "free birth control campaign", "contraception coverage", and "birth control coverage".

NATIONAL

Prior Landscape: No federal mandate. Status Indigenous or Inuit patients have most options covered under National Insured Health Benefits (NIHB). **Campaign Details:** Canadian Federation for Medical Students (CFMS): Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights; Dr. Rupinder Toor Strategic Approach: Lobbying MPs, media campaigns, national petition. **Policy Commitments:** Opposition party

commitment as part of national pharmacare.

Universal No-Cost Contraception

Age-Based Coverage

Policy Commitment Made

Means-Tested Coverage Only



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Limited coverage of contraceptives following therapeutic abortion.

Campaign Details: AccessBC grassroots campaign established in 2017

Strategic Approach: Letter-writing campaign, research, mobilizing the public, lobbying MLAs, outreach, and consulting with government. Policy Commitments: No-cost contraception as of April 1. Pharmacists can prescribe contraceptives.

ALBERTA

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Limited coverage for <26yo at specific sexual & reproductive health clinic. Pharmacist prescribing. **Campaign Details:** No formal campaign. OBGYN residents doing grassroots advocacy. Strategic Approach: Writing op-eds, lobbying MLAs **Policy Commitments:** Included in 2023 opposition party platform.

SASKATCHEWAN

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Free emergency contraception and condoms. Pharmacist prescribing. Campaign Details: Universal Access to Contraception Saskatchewan grassroots campaign established in 2023 by medical students. Strategic Approach: Writing op-eds, lobbying MLAs **Policy Commitments:** Commitment by official opposition party.

MANITOBA

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Limited no-cost coverage after therapeutic abortion or through specific clinics.

Campaign Details: Birth Control Access for Manitoba grassroots campaign founded by OBGYNs, residents and medical students. Strategic Approach: Consulting with government. **Policy Commitments:** Commitment by official opposition party.

Conclusions

In Canada, the primary approach by advocates is letter writing, statement generation, and lobbying government. Campaigns variably have clinician-in-practice involvement and have driven system level change.

ONTARIO

Prior Landscape: No-cost if <25yo and no private

Campaign Details: OBGYN residents started Cover

Policy Commitments: Included in 2022 opposition

Strategic Approach: Letter-writing campaigns,

research, policy statements, lobbying MPPs,

outreach, and consulting with government

insurance. Means-tested if >25yo.

ContraceptiON campaign

party platform.

YUKON

Prior Landscape: Limited pharmacare coverage of contraceptives (Mirena only for failed tx of endo, Nexplanon not listed). Some clinics offering subsidized meds.

Campaign Details: No grassroots campaign found. Political party made a campaign announcement during the 2021 election

Strategic Approach: N/A

Policy Commitments: Included in 2021 platform of party that formed part of coalition government.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Campaign Details: No grassroots campaign found. Government currently seeking feedback on nocost contraception.

Strategic Approach: N/A **Policy Commitments: N/A**



Prior Landscape: Condition-based coverage for patients not covered under NIHB. Campaign Details: No grassroots campaign found. Strategic Approach: N/A **Policy Commitments: N/A**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Prior Landscape: Various plans possible. Varying amounts of co-pay.

Campaign Details: No grassroots campaign found. Strategic Approach: Speaking to media, opinion pieces.

Policy Commitments: N/A

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Planned Parenthood has more affordable birth control. Campaign Details: No grassroots campaign found. Strategic Approach: N/A **Policy Commitments:** N/A

NOVA SCOTIA

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Pharmacists can prescribe contraceptives. Free Birth Control Act (Bill 73) went to first reading in NS legislature in March 2021.

Campaign Details: Grassroots advocacy by Access Now Nova Scotia; private members' bill.

Strategic Approach: Speaking to media, opinion pieces.

Policy Commitments: Included in 2021 opposition party platform.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Limited pharmacist coverage. Limited free coverage through Horizon NB.

Campaign Details: Save Clinic 554 (reproductive iustice group)

Strategic Approach: Media campaigns. Policy Commitments: None yet. Current government very resistant.



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meds completely covered with claim slip. All 18-25yo covered. Pharmacist prescribing. *Campaign Details:* No grassroots campaign found.

QUEBEC

Prior Landscape: Means-tested coverage. Some

Support statement from Québec Solidaire party. Strategic Approach: N/A

Policy Commitments: Included in 2022 opposition party platform.