# **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.