



**Action Canada**  
**for Sexual Health & Rights**

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of various contraceptive pills and their blister packs. The image is heavily filtered with a warm, orange-red color. Several blister packs are visible, some containing white, oval-shaped pills, and others containing yellow, round pills. The packs are arranged in a way that shows different types of contraceptives, including what appears to be emergency contraception and regular birth control pills.

# **How to Build Momentum While Campaigning for Universal Contraception Access**

# The Landscape

Following decades of advocacy, British Columbia became the first province to implement Universal Contraception Coverage in 2023. This groundbreaking victory for reproductive rights accelerated the movement towards Federal Pharmacare legislation, which officially passed the Senate in October 2024. The Federal Pharmacare Act will start with coverage for diabetes medication and contraception, and lays the foundation for all essential medications to be covered.

This represents the largest expansion of healthcare in a generation, and provides an opportunity to shape the future of healthcare for decades to come. However,

for this transformative policy become a reality, every province must sign on. We are at a critical moment for every province to collaborate with the federal government to implement the National Pharmacare program across the country.

This guide aims to support provincial advocates in effectively and persuasively communicating about the urgent need for universal contraception access. This toolkit will outline strategies and frameworks to capitalize on the window of opportunity as each province enters into negotiations to implement the Federal Pharmacare Act.

## Overall Key Messages

Everyone deserves the freedom to make choices about their health and future without financial barriers. Investing in free contraception improves people's health, reduces gender inequality and saves money for the government and everyone in Canada. Free contraception is about building a future where everyone has the chance to reach their potential and live on their own terms.

**No one should have to choose between paying for groceries and accessing contraception.**

**Contraception is right, not a luxury. Access should not depend on where you live, what job you have, or what's in your bank account.**

**Everyone should be able to decide if, when and with whom to have children. Universal contraception gives people choices over their career and education, allowing individuals, families and communities to thrive.**

# Formula for Persuasive Messaging

1. **Open with shared values** to welcome people in across the political spectrum.
2. **Introduce the problem** clearly and simply.
3. **Present the solution** with a vision for change.
4. **Conclude with a call to action.**

## Sample Messaging Framework

### Opening with Shared Values (Affordability)

“Everyone deserves the freedom to make decisions about their health, their bodies, and their futures without financial barriers. Universal contraception is about choice, affordability, and health equity.”

### Naming the Problem

“Right now, access to contraception in Canada depends on where you live, what job you have, and how much money you make. This means too many people are falling through the cracks—especially low-income individuals, youth, and those in rural or remote areas.”

### Introducing the Solution

“But there’s a clear solution. If our province implements the Federal Pharmacare Act, we can ensure that no one has to choose between paying for groceries and accessing contraception.”

### Call to Action

“It’s time to make contraception access universal. Let’s call on our leaders to ensure everyone has control over their own health and future. Together, we can deliver real change. Make your voice heard today.”

# Additional Values

## Privacy

A patchwork system of insurance doesn't afford people privacy when making decisions around contraception. This is particularly harmful for youth who rely on their parent's insurance, and for those experiencing intimate partner violence. Here is an example of how the framework could be used to emphasize the importance of privacy under universal contraception:

### Opening with Shared Values (Privacy)

"Everyone should be able to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health in privacy. When someone is choosing a contraception method, they should be free from judgement or financial limitations."

### Naming the Problem

"Unfortunately, for people experiencing intimate partner violence, choices around contraception are rarely available."

### Introducing the Solution

"Thankfully, there are policies that can support the health of survivors. With the barrier of cost eliminated, individuals are empowered to choose if or when to have children, without their purchases monitored or controlled. This is an essential step to addressing violence against women and improving health inequities."

### Call to Action

"Together, we can make a future where everyone has control over their body."

**This framework can be utilized to serve a variety of arguments. Others include the case that people should be able to choose the type of contraception that works best for their health (not just the cheapest method), and that everyone should be able to plan their future.**



# Anticipating Questions and Pivoting Back

**Q: ‘Why should taxpayers fund contraception when it’s already affordable for many?’**

## **Shared values:**

“Healthcare should be universal—it’s a core value we share as Canadians. No one should be left behind simply because of their financial situation.”

## **Fly by:**

“While it’s true that some people can afford contraception, many others can’t, and that creates inequality in healthcare.”

## **Key message:**

“By making contraception universal, we reduce costs for everyone in the long run and create a healthier, more equitable society.”

## Statistics

- 1 in 5 Canadians have insufficient or no drug coverage.
- The cost of IUDs can be up to \$400, making them out of reach for many.
- Most Canadians use the cheapest form of contraception, not the one that is most effective, or best for their health and lifestyle. This contributes to the reality that nearly half of all pregnancies in Canada are unintended.
- Research shows that for every 1 dollar invested in universal contraception, 9 dollars are saved in the public sector with upstream preventions such as reducing the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions.
- Universal contraception will benefit 9 million Canadians who are of reproductive age.

# Dos and Don'ts

## Dos

1. Connect to shared values with specific examples.  
“No one should have to choose between paying for groceries and accessing contraception.”
2. Repeat your message: Stay consistent and reinforce the values of health, economic fairness, and equality.

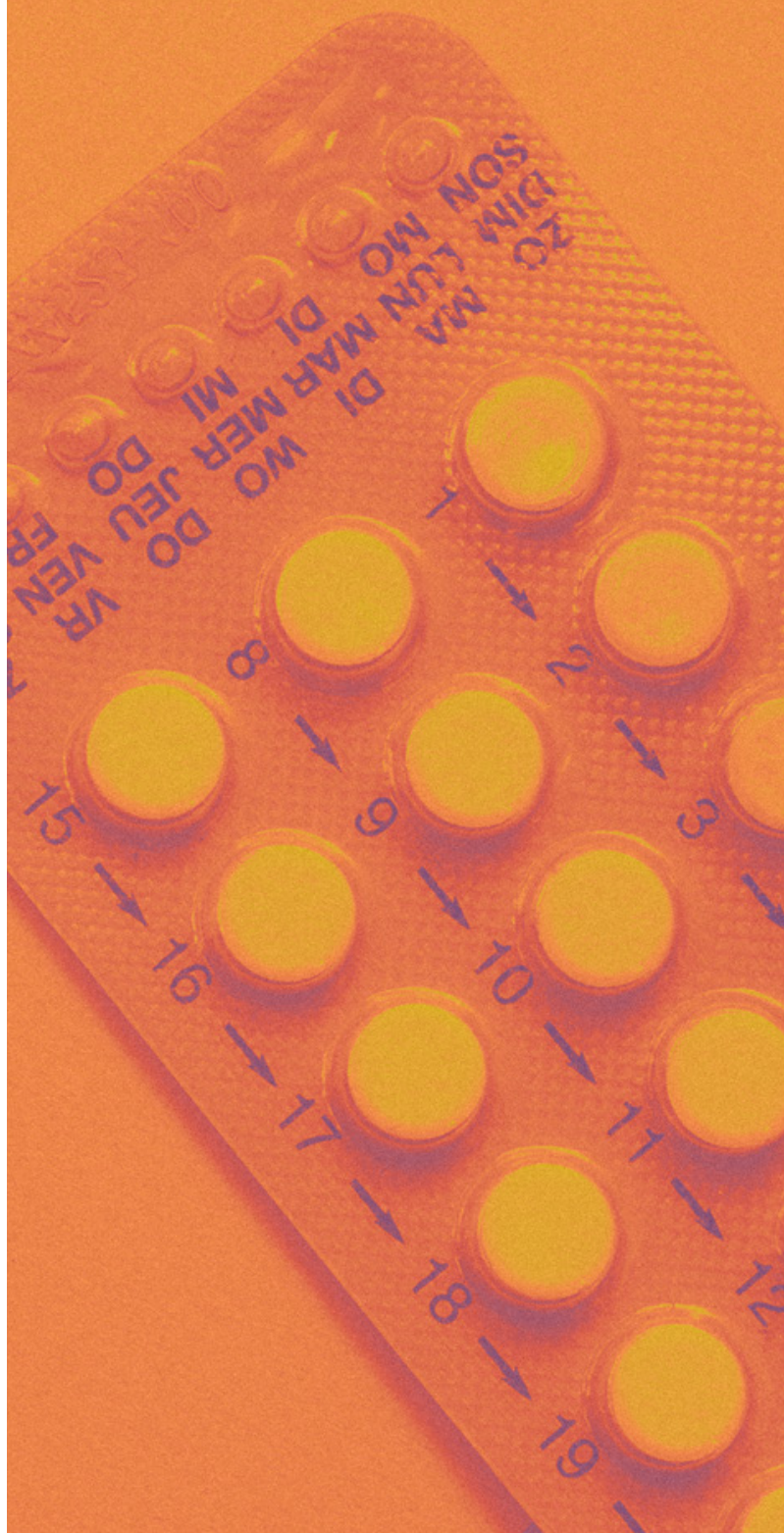
## Don'ts

1. Discount the diverse reasons people use contraception. Beyond birth control, contraception plays a vital role in improving health and well-being, including managing conditions like endometriosis, PCOS, and pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder.
2. Don't dismiss people's concerns about hormonal contraception. Acknowledge the real experiences of those who face debilitating side effects or fear hormonal methods. Compassionate engagement is key—listen, validate, and emphasize that universal coverage ensures everyone has the freedom to choose what works best for their body and health.
3. Avoid opposition framing: Focus on solutions and shared goals rather than reiterating the opposition's myths or framing. For example:
  - Say: “Universal access ensures dignity for all.”
  - Avoid: “Contraception isn't just for teenagers or low-income families.”
  - Stay out of the weeds: Avoid policy jargon. Instead of saying, “Contraception should be added to provincial Pharmacare regulations,” say, “Contraception should be free for everyone.”

### PROVINCIAL CAMPAIGN TIP

## Tie messaging to local identities and shared sense of pride. For example:

“As Ontarians, we believe in fairness and freedom for everyone. That's why we're calling on our province to make contraception free for everyone.”





# Vision For The Future

The Federal Pharmacare Act is a historic opportunity to help millions of Canadians. Beginning with coverage for diabetes medication and contraception, Pharmacare also lays the foundation for all essential medications to be covered, which would be the largest expansion of healthcare in a generation. These initial steps not only address urgent health needs, but help create a future where medications are accessible to everyone, regardless of income or location.

Canada is the only country with Universal Healthcare and no Universal Pharmacare. This gap leaves millions without the medications they need to thrive. With the passage of Pharmacare, we have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to close that gap and build a country that reflects our values of equality, affordability and health.

However, this vision can only become a reality if every province signs on.

We hope this toolkit empowers advocates across Canada, as shape the future of healthcare in Canada for decades to come. The time to act is now.



Follow Action Canada on Instagram to see more examples of this messaging at work:  
[@actioncanadashr](https://www.instagram.com/actioncanadashr)

