

# Drug Spending at a Glance

## How much do Canadians spend on drugs?

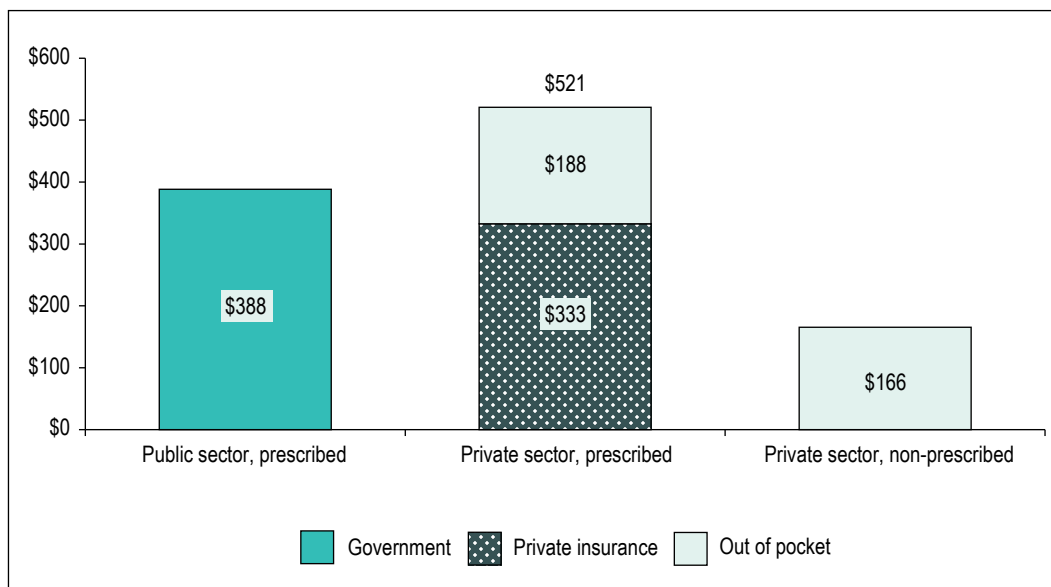
- In 2018, total drug spending is forecast to make up the second-largest share (15.7%) of health expenditure in Canada, at \$39.8 billion, or \$1,074 per capita.
- Prescribed drugs are forecast to represent 84.6% of total drug expenditure; non-prescribed drugs, which include over-the-counter drugs and other medical non-durables, are expected to account for 15.4%.
- Multiple payers are involved in financing drugs. In the public sector, these payers include provincial/territorial programs (\$12.2 billion, \$330 per capita), federal direct drug subsidy programs (\$0.83 billion, \$22 per capita) and social security funds (\$1.3 billion, \$36 per capita). In the private sector, payers include private health insurance (\$12.3 billion, \$333 per capita) and households or individuals paying out of pocket (\$13.1 billion, \$354 per capita).



### For more information

See also the Canadian Institute for Health Information's report [Prescribed Drug Spending in Canada, 2018: A Focus on Public Drug Programs](#).

**Figure 1** Drug spending per capita, by source of finance, Canada, 2018<sup>f</sup>



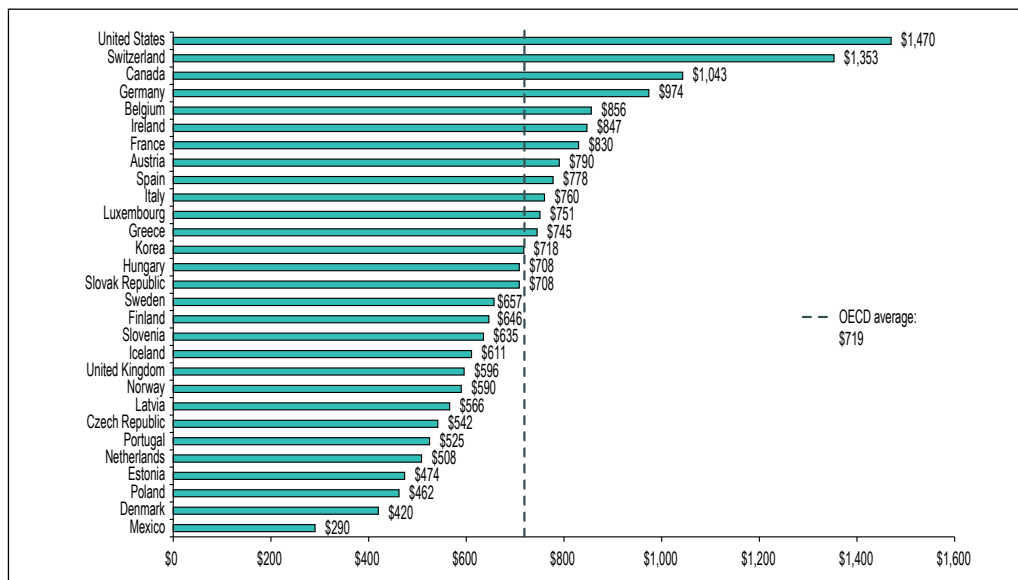
**Note**  
f: Forecast.

**Source**  
National Health Expenditure Database, 2018, Canadian Institute for Health Information.

# How does Canada compare internationally on drug spending?

Drugs constitute a large share of health expenditure across countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Figure 2 shows that Canada spent CA\$1,043 on drugs per capita in 2016, less than the United States (CA\$1,470) but more than most other OECD countries. Canada's per capita spending on drugs has been stable in the last decade.

**Figure 2** Total expenditure on drugs\* per capita, Canadian dollar purchasing power parity, 29 selected OECD countries,† 2016



**Notes**

\* Includes pharmaceutical goods and other medical non-durables.

† These are the countries for which data was reported in 2016.

**Source**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. [OECD Health Statistics 2018](#). 2018.

The public share of drug spending in 2016 varied among the OECD countries, ranging from 33% in Lithuania to 84% in Germany. Canada, with a public share of 36%, was among the countries with the lowest shares. This share has been stable in recent years.



For data-specific information:

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