



April 14, 2010

**OPEN LETTER TO SHOPPERS DRUG MART:
STOP OBSTRUCTING THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO LOWER COST DRUGS**

OFL's NEW FACEBOOK SITE:

Your views on Shoppers Drug Mart's attempt to prevent public access to lower cost generic drugs:

GO HERE: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&gid=114923428525472>

As President of Canada's largest labour federation representing one million workers, I am calling on you to immediately cease using your customers and those who need access to medicine as pawns in your fight with the Ontario government as it attempts to lower generic drug costs by 50 per cent; to immediately restore hours in London, Ontario and eliminate your newly-imposed costs for deliveries.

These new costs primarily target seniors, the very elderly in retirement homes, people with mobility impediments, the ill, mothers with sick children and numerous others who are now being squeezed to come up with cash. It is an appalling way to treat your own customers.

In addition, your new threats to layoff workers and cut back hours, despite profits that spiked from more than \$300 million to \$585 million over the past three years, is a disgraceful way to treat your own employees that are no doubt under extreme stress at this point.

It is truly a sad statement on your sense of corporate responsibility that you would hold to ransom your own staff and the most vulnerable people in your community in your fight with the government.

Your continued threats, notably warnings of store closures and curtailment of services resemble the scare tactics of your counterparts in Ireland when a similar reform was attempted. There, the pharmacies warned of mass closures, lay-offs of 5,000 workers and worse outcomes for customers; yet nine months later, 130 new stores opened, more jobs were created and profits were high.

Your actions are rapidly placing you high among Ontario's worst corporate citizens. For the cash-paying public, not to mention cancer-care patients, seniors, elderly people in long-term care facilities and retirement homes, workers in plans and retirees, those with low incomes and many others, this reform is designed to lead to expanded access to drugs and to lower costs.

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We are therefore urging unionized workers in the London area NOT to shop at Shoppers Drug Mart. We hope the general public will also vote with their feet and follow this lead. Indeed, we are urging the public to have their say on the OFL's new facebook site. Finally, we remind you that you enjoy the PRIVILEGE, not the right, to consumer loyalty. Using your clout and deep pockets against the best interests of the public is not only inexplicable but is also an action that will continue to linger long after your fight with the government is over.

Once again, we are urging you to align yourself with the public, rather than the interests of the generic drug companies. Under no circumstances, ever, should those requiring medicines face barriers to access.

Yours very truly,

Patrick (Sid) Ryan
President

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