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Finally, something Mr. Ford and I can agree on!

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I'm trying not to be too shortsighted about this issue and I know, like many of Mr. Ford's plans, there are likely still a few kinks to be worked out. That said, on the topic of changes to prescription benefits for those 25 and under, I think Ol' Doug might finally be doing something right. In looking to fix an initiative the Liberals launched several years ago, and which many seriously questioned as it wreaked havoc for families and pharmacies across Ontario, the Doug Ford government is reversing the ?free for all? that prescription medicine has become. I'm talking about the repeal of universal OHIP+ coverage for everyone under the age of 25 (regardless of whether they had coverage elsewhere) and creating instead, an OHIP+ plan that is now in place for those who need it most ? families with children under 25 who have no alternative coverage elsewhere, period.

OHIP + (Version 2019) is now specifically designed for those 24 years and under who have OHIP coverage but who are not covered by any private plan. Young adults, and by extension their families, who qualify for OHIP+, need do nothing different ? there is no need to enroll or register, if you are under the age of 25 you'll simply be required to present your Health Card to be able to access prescriptions from a list of more than 4400 approved drugs. If your drug isn't on that list, other programs like Trillium or Exceptional Access might provide the coverage you need. (Before you assume I'm not affected by any of this and therefore my opinion is biased, I do know firsthand the plan has flaws. Our family is one of those not covered by any plan and which must apply for exceptional access to costly drugs that are not on the approved list.)

The new version of OHIP+ might not be perfect but the reality is, there was absolutely no reason for the government to be paying for prescription benefits for those already covered by a plan whether through their own or their parents' employer. That's just a no-brainer. The math simply didn't add up and under that scenario, the insurance companies made out ?like bandits? as they collected premiums on policies but paid out significantly less on claims. Pharmacists knew this plan was flawed, insurers knew this plan was flawed and newspaper columnists and critics widely condemned it. In fact, it appears the only ones who didn't see the potential flaws were the Liberals ? possibly because they were too busy pandering for votes before an election?

You might be wondering about my change of heart. Just a week or so ago I was asking if we could impeach the Premier. In fact, if you're a regular reader, you will know that I am no fan of Mr. Ford, particularly when it comes to his absolutely devastating cuts to education. As a former candidate running for School Board Trustee and who describes herself as ?passionate about education? how could I be? However, when it comes to OHIP +, Ol' Doug might be on to something and I think I can help him even further. I have a simple suggestion: Mr. Ford, you are about to save untold millions from not having to pay out on benefits claims for thousands of people under the age of 25 who have benefits coverage elsewhere. These are the exact same folks who desperately need access to excellent educational resources. You know, little things - resources like Teachers, ECE's, ERW's, Autism Spectrum services, providers of support for those with exceptionalities ? heck, even textbooks in the classroom, books for our libraries and access to technology tools like tablets. University students who are not ?Marxists? by the way (as one of your recent solicitation emails suggested) could use a break on tuition and/or OSAP and/or loan repayment schedules. Might I respectfully suggest you take some of your newfound savings and re-invest them in our school system? Please. Throw in a ?price-matching? scheme whereby you ?donate? $10 million to education like you ?donated? to horse racing and then we really might have something to agree on!