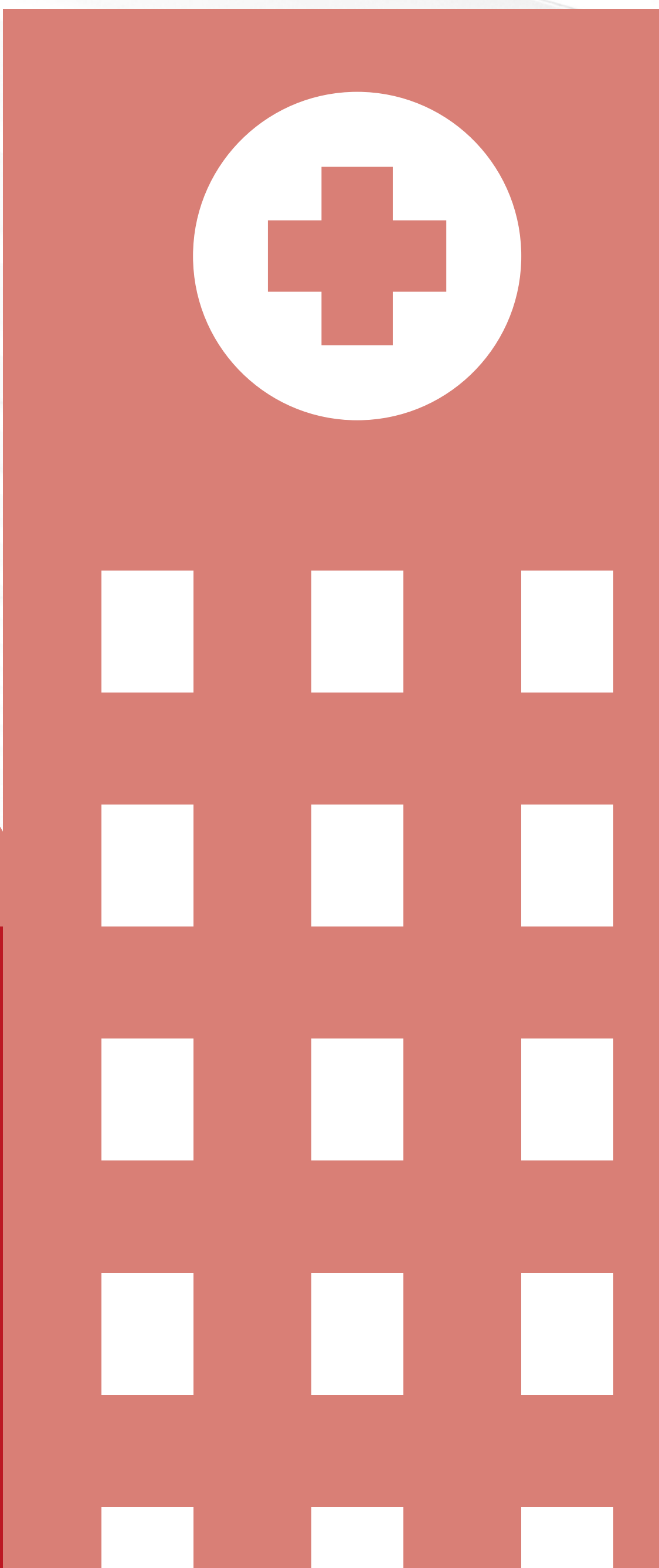




A Toolkit for Accessing Health Care Services as an Immigrant in Alberta



This toolkit is a guide for new immigrants in Alberta on what healthcare services are available to them and how to access them. It includes information for both individuals who have an Alberta health care number, and for those who don't and may be considered "undocumented."



What is Alberta Health Care Coverage?

Alberta Health Care Coverage is a government funded healthcare system that provides free health care services to Alberta citizens, permanent residents, and individuals who are here on a work or school visa.

In order to access these services, you must have an Alberta Healthcare Card that contains your unique Personal Healthcare Number (PHN). Anyone who is eligible can apply for a card through their local registry.



Where do I start?

1

The healthcare services that you can access will depend on whether or not you have an active PHN. If you have an active PHN then see step 2. If you do not, skip to step 4.




2

With Alberta Health Care coverage, there are many services that are free (fully covered) and some that are not:

Services that are FREE:

- Doctors Appointments 
- Visits to the specialists
- Emergency visits to the eye doctor
- Emergency department visits 
- Hospitalizations
- Medications given in the hospital
- Screening procedures and lab tests
- Some medical procedures

Services that you have to pay for:

- Dentist appointments and procedures (eg. braces, cleanings, cavity fillings) 
- Non-emergency visits to the eye doctor and/or glasses
- Prescription medications from the pharmacy 
- Doctor's note (eg. sick note)
- Cosmetic surgeries or procedures
- Ambulance transportation services 

*keep in mind, some of these things may be covered if you have private insurance from your employer

3

How to access specific services:

- To find a family doctor you can visit the website: www.albertafindadoctor.ca
- To find a dentist or eye doctor you can phone a local clinic and book an appointment
- To see a specialist you often need a referral from your family doctor (you must see the family doctor first for an assessment and they will send you to the specialist)
- To access a pharmacy/pharmacist you can walk in to any nearby community pharmacy, no appointments are necessary
- For emergency medical services you can call 911 for ambulance transportation or you can walk in to the nearest emergency department

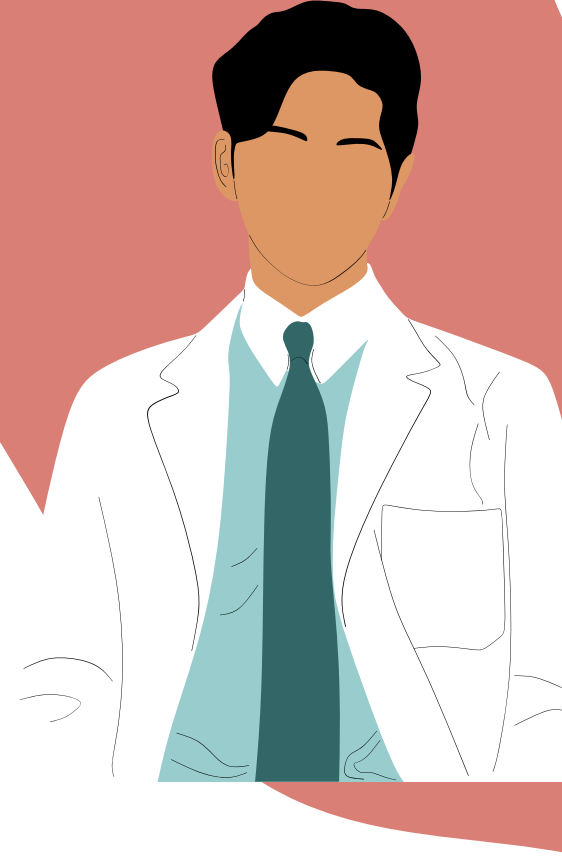




What if I don't have an active Personal Healthcare Number?

If you don't have an active PHN, none of the above services will be covered and will have to be paid for out of pocket. You can try to access these services in the same ways listed in step 3, but sometimes even with payment, there is a chance that services may be denied.

The remainder of the infographic will focus on the services that pharmacists provide, and how they can help you access healthcare at a cheaper cost if you don't have Alberta Health Care Coverage.



What is a Pharmacist?

Pharmacists are medication experts. They prepare prescriptions, make sure medicines and doses are correct, prevent harmful drug interactions, and counsel patients on the safe and appropriate use of their medications

What Can Pharmacists do in Alberta?

- Assess and Prescribe for Minor Ailments*
- Renew or extend prescriptions
- Order labs, interpret them, and follow up with the patient
- Injection of vaccines and certain drugs
- Help manage ongoing conditions



*Minor ailments are conditions that can be managed with minimal treatment or with self care strategies and include:

	Cold Sores		Skin Rash		Menstrual Cramps
	Heartburn/ Acid Reflux		Urinary tract Infections		Oral Thrush
	Insect/Tick Bites		Hay Fever		Skin Infection
	Muscle Aches and Pains		Hemorrhoids		Pink Eye

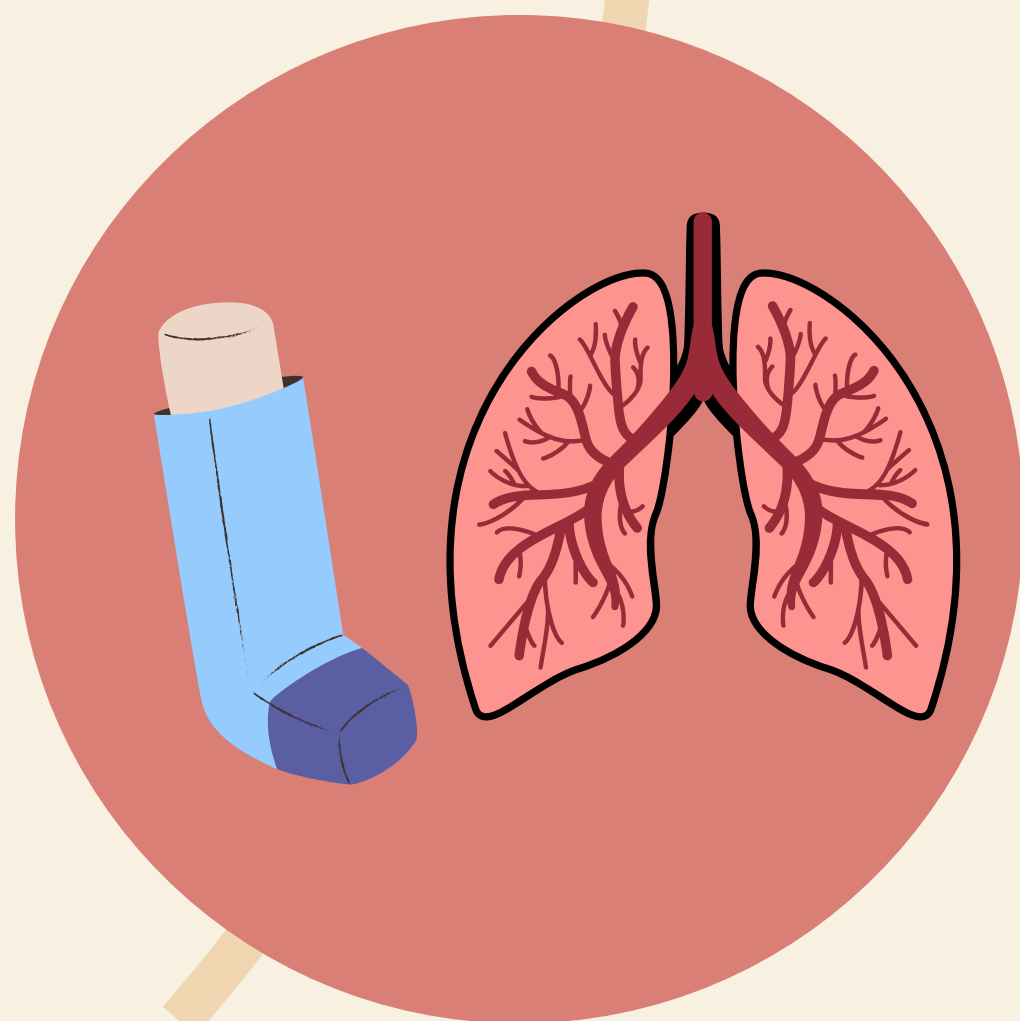
Conditions that a Pharmacist can Help Manage



Diabetes



High Blood Pressure



**Asthma/
COPD**



Others

Cost Comparison **\$\$**

The cost to visit a doctor in Alberta is approximately \$200 if you don't have a PHN, but the average cost to be assessed by a pharmacist is \$20 at a community pharmacy

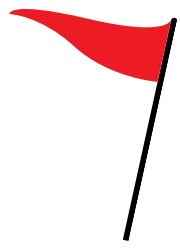
How/where to Access

Pharmacists can be accessed at any community pharmacy and no appointment is necessary. To do an assessment and prescribe a medication, the pharmacist must have Additional Prescribing Authority (APA).



There are also pharmacist led walk-in clinics available where you can book an appointment to speak with a prescribing pharmacist.

Disclaimer:



Pharmacist will assess conditions and ask about red flags (signs that would require more assessment by the doctor) so there is always a chance that they may refuse to prescribe. It is also required that pharmacists should have a professional relationship with their patient before prescribing a medication for a condition that has not been treated before. If there is no prior relationship or the pharmacist does not feel comfortable prescribing, the patient may need to see the doctor for the first prescription, then the pharmacist can take over ongoing management.

**This information is
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