



The Canadian Coalition
for Green Health Care
Coalition canadienne pour
un système de santé écologique

Sustainable Prescribing

Sustainable for our patients
Sustainable for our health system
Sustainable for our planet

We prescribe a lot of medications in Canada. Studies suggest we over-prescribe by as much as 20-30%.

There are **potential harms** of medications, which led to the formation of the Canadian medication safety coalition. <https://ismpcanada.ca/impact/canadian-medication-safety-coalition/>

There are also organizations in Canada which have been helping healthcare providers avoid over-prescribing for years. Please visit these websites to learn more:

Deprescribing.org

Long Term Care framework

<https://deprescribing.org/resources/deprescribing-in-ltc-framework/>

Canadian Medication Appropriateness and Deprescribing Network (CADeN)

Outpatients or inpatients

<https://www.deprescribingnetwork.ca/algorithms>

Choosing Wisely Canada

Hospital pharmacists

<https://choosingwiselycanada.org/recommendation/hospital-pharmacy/?highlight=hospital>

Recommendations by specialty

<https://choosingwiselycanada.org/recommendations/>

The **financial cost** of prescribed drug spending can be found in this Canadian Institute for Health Information document. (See page 6)

<https://www.cihi.ca/sites/default/files/document/pdex-report-2019-en-web.pdf>

“Public drug program spending accounted for 43.6% of the \$34.3 billion of prescribed drug spending in 2019, as reported in CIHI’s National Health Expenditure Trends, 1975 to 2019. 1 The public share of prescribed drug spending varied among provinces, ranging from 31.7% in New Brunswick and 34.0% in Newfoundland and Labrador to 47.4% in Manitoba and 48.6% in Saskatchewan. Outside of the public sector, prescribed drug spending financed by private insurers was \$12.7 billion (36.9%), with the remaining \$6.8 billion (19.9%) financed by Canadian households.1 Public drug program spending does not include spending on drugs dispensed in hospitals or on those funded outside public drug programs (e.g., through cancer agencies).”

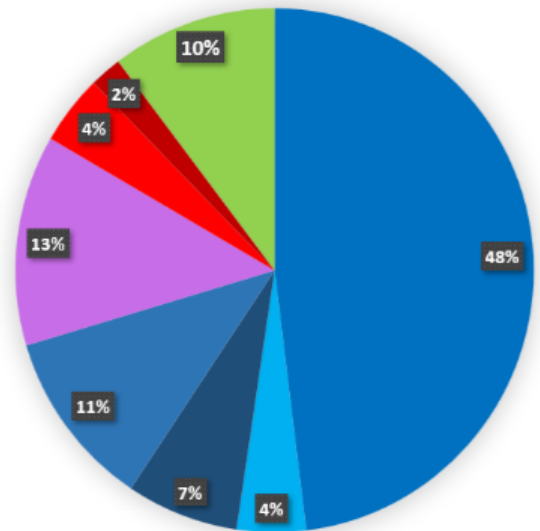
These costs have increased since 2019 and these numbers do not include over-the-counter medications. The money spent on over-prescribed medications could be moved to other areas of a strained Canadian health system.

What does this have to do with **Greening healthcare?**

Outpatient clinics

The production of medications contributes 48% of the greenhouse gases within a Primary Healthcare office. The emissions from metered dose inhalers add another 13%. If an office could decrease medications by 10%, it would be as much as the Building Energy and Water and Waste GHGs combined!

Categories	Contribution
Supply Chain	
Pharmaceuticals	48%
Medical Equipment	4%
Non-Medical Equipment	7%
Other Procurement	11%
Medications (Delivery of Care)	
Anaesthetic Gases & MDIs	13%
Delivery of Care	
Building Energy	4%
Water & Waste	2%
Travel	
Business & Personal Travel	10%



Carbon footprint in Primary care - UK

The Lancet 2021 Tennison, et al

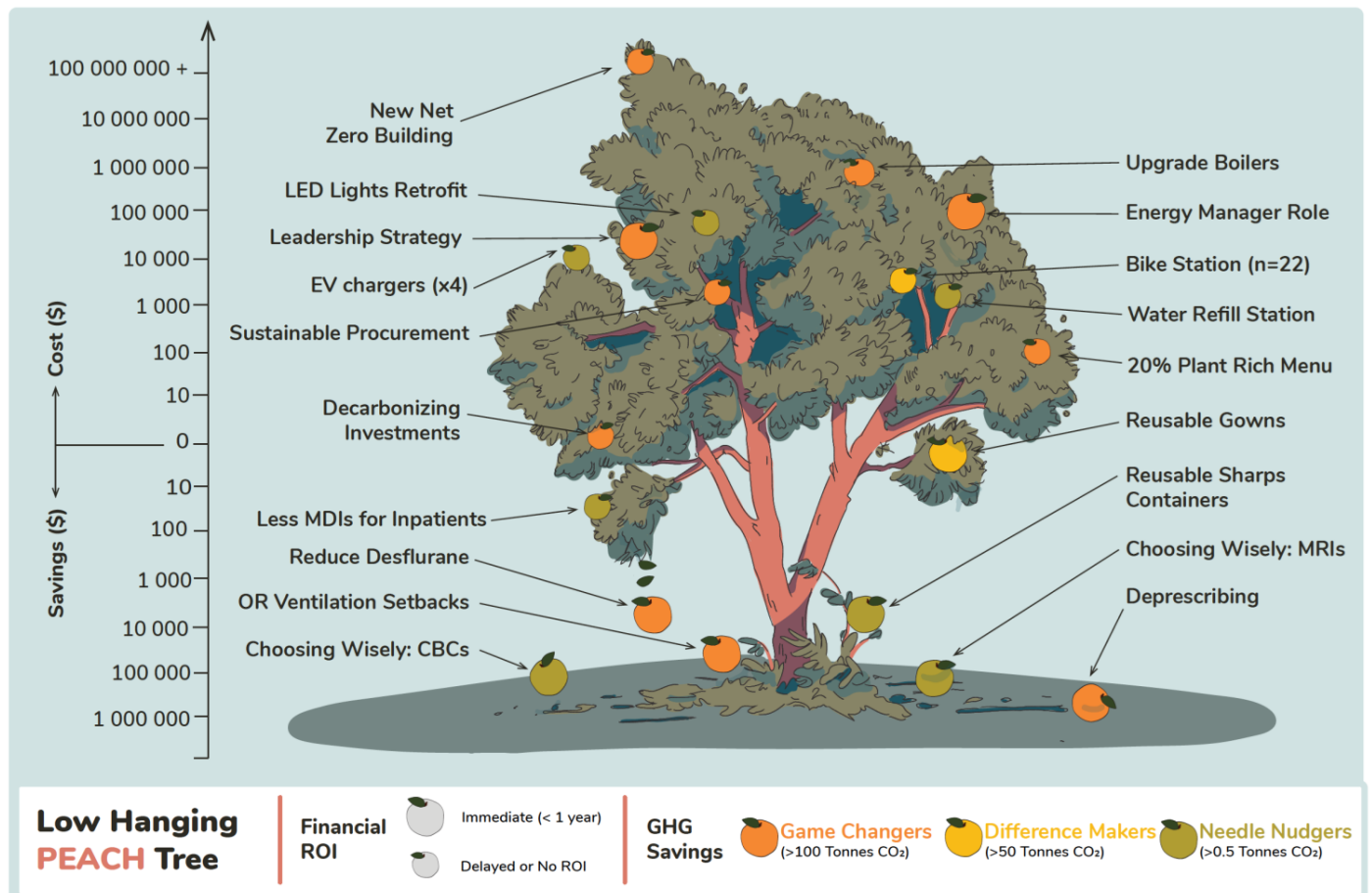
The waste from medications results in further harms to the environment.

Hospitals

If we follow appropriate prescribing guidelines, especially for the elderly, we can decrease medications by well over 5%. This would save a 200-bed hospital in Canada over 100 Tonnes of CO2 equivalents, and over \$200,000 per year.

Our low-hanging fruit tree illustrates the amount of CO2 saved with various environmental initiatives. In terms of cost and environmental impact, deprescribing is one of the best fruits to pick. See the full article here:

<https://www.longwoods.com/content/26946/healthcare-quarterly/identifying-opportunities-for-greenhouse-gas-reductions-and-cost-savings-in-hospitals-a-knowledge-t>



We also need to demand that medications are produced with their carbon footprint in mind. We need to support companies which are working hard to make greener products. We should be able to make choices about medications based, in part, on a climate-score.

The environmental side effects of medications: Reducing the carbon footprint of psychiatry.
<https://journalofpsychiatryreform.com/2022/07/21/the-environmental-side-effects-of-medications-reducing-the-carbon-footprint-of-psychiatry/>.

We will be adding rating systems for suppliers to our website very soon. We cannot rate individual products yet because we do not know the life cycle analysis for all the things we buy. We can, however, rate the companies which make the products.

This message was brought to you by your friends at PEACH Health Ontario and the Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare.

