



Health Costs in Saint John, N.B.

-Calculating a Living Wage

The Living Wage framework is based on a family of four- two working adults and children ages 4 and 7.



A Living Wage Framework



The Human Development Council is in the process of calculating a Living Wage for Saint John. The first step is to determine local costs of living. This fact sheet is the third in a series to be released in lead up to a full Living Wage report. Keep an eye out for the upcoming overview of Shelter costs in Saint John. You can also find the first two fact sheets, -Food costs and Childcare costs- on our website.¹

**What
is a
Living
Wage?**

**The hourly wage
necessary to
meet basic
needs and
stay out of
poverty.**



Determining Costs: Health Care

Medicare in New Brunswick, as in the rest of Canada, is often said to be "deep and narrow." It is "deep" because services made available through Medicare are covered completely (you don't have to pay for most everyday doctors' visits). However, it is "narrow" in that Medicare only applies to services authorized by a medical doctor or within a hospital setting; a lot of health care needs are not covered (see below). In order to prepare for these additional expenses, our Living Wage family is purchasing a modest private health insurance plan at \$164.81/month²

**Health costs
\$164.81
per month for
our family of
four.**

Our family is not choosing the NB Drug Plan. Although it is less expensive (at \$116/month) the NB Drug Plan only covers prescription drugs (our private plan covers vision, dental, physiotherapy, and much more). Our family is not eligible for GNB's Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision program because their net family income for a family of four is more than \$31, 142.



Services not covered by Medicare in New Brunswick:³



Ambulance
Services



Dentistry



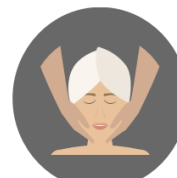
Eye Glasses/
Optometry



Prescription Drugs
(Outside Hospitals)



Prosthetic
Limbs



Physiotherapy/
Chiropractics



Mental Health/
Psychology

Yet, 20% of New Brunswickers do not have additional health coverage.⁶

1 in 10 Canadians cannot
afford to take their medications as
prescribed.⁴

Overall, Canada spends **42%** more
on pharmaceuticals than the
median rate of comparable OECD
countries.⁴

*"Social protection of vulnerable groups within
the healthcare system must be complemented
by broader social policies aimed at improving
the economic situation of the poor"*
- Schokkaert et al.

1. Food: http://0104.nccdn.net/1_5/047/1e1/1ec/FINAL---1-.pdf Childcare: http://0104.nccdn.net/1_5/1c5/3e0/253/ChildcareFINAL.pdf

2. Medavie Blue Cross: calc.medavie.bluecross.ca

3. GNB. <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/health/MedicarePrescriptionDrugPlan/content/medicare/CoverageandClaimsInsideNewBrunswick.html>

4. Morgan, Steven G, and Katherine Boothe. 2016. "Universal Prescription Drug Coverage in Canada: Long-Promised Yet Undelivered" Healthcare Management Forum. 29(6):247-254.

5. Schokkaert, Erik, Jonas Steel, and Carine Van de Voorde. 2017. "Out-of-Pocket Payments and Subjective Unmet Need of Healthcare" Appl Health Econ Health Policy. Epub ahead of print.

6. GNB. Health. 2015. Access to Prescription Drugs in New Brunswick. http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/NBDrugReview/Discussion-Paper_NB-Drug-Plan-Review.pdf



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