

# A wise prescription

Under pressure, the Rae government will extend Ontario's \$1.2 billion drug benefit plan next April to include 20 per cent of the province's residents who don't have coverage of any kind.

This is good news. Now, thousands of people — the working poor, the mentally ill and people with serious illnesses such as cancer and AIDS — will receive the assistance they urgently require.

The extended benefits will cost between \$60 and \$80 million a year, and a deductible will apply, although it hasn't been set yet. Seniors and welfare recipients will continue to have 100 per cent of their drug costs covered by the provincial plan.

After stalling for months, Premier Bob Rae was finally pushed into action by AIDS activists threatening a massive demonstration at Queen's Park. Politics aside, Rae has done the right thing and kept a promise to provide thousands of Ontarians with life-sustaining drug therapies they otherwise couldn't afford.

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## New drug benefit plan

Ontario's \$1 billion drug benefit plan will be extended next April to include tens of thousands of people not covered by private or government insurance, Ontario Premier Bob Rae says.

Rae, who announced the move yesterday, said 20 per cent of Ontario residents — the working poor, the mentally ill and people with serious

illnesses such as cancer and AIDS — currently aren't covered by a drug plan.

But it took an ultimatum from AIDS activists to force Rae's inner cabinet to act, The Star's Thomas Walkom reports.

The move is expected to cost between \$60 million and \$80 million a year.

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