



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Latest pharmacy developments in response to COVID-19

March 17, 2021

CPhA

COVID Conversations: Preparing your pharmacy to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations

As Canada moves into its next phase of COVID-19 vaccination, pharmacists are playing an integral part in the vaccine rollout. [Register](#) for free and join us on March 24 from 2:00-3:30 PM ET for Preparing your pharmacy to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations: Tips from the front line, where our panel of community pharmacists from across the country share how they are preparing to vaccinate their patients against COVID-19. Panellists will discuss their own preparations and will provide practical tips on managing patient volume and expectations, staffing, workflow and other considerations.

CPhA's COVID-19 web pages are being updated regularly at www.pharmacists.ca/covid19 and www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr.

Provincial

BC pharmacists ready to administer COVID vaccine

BC pharmacists are ready to administer the COVID-19 vaccine in pharmacies once they are given the go-ahead by the provincial government. Annette Robinson, board president of the BC Pharmacy Association (BCPhA), told [NEWS 1130](#) she is confident that day is coming soon, saying they are in constant contact with the province and they're ready to go when called. "There are so many factors that will cause things to change dramatically," she explained. "It all depends on how fast we're able to know which vaccines will be provided, how many and where they're

going to be going and how they're going to be distributed." Robinson said they'll be able to ramp things up quickly once the province comes to them. "We're trained and we've been working along with our health care partners in mass immunization clinics," she said.

SK pharmacists gear up for phase 2 of vaccine rollout

Saskatchewan pharmacists are expected to be vaccinated against COVID-19 starting March 22, [according to Canadian Healthcare Network](#) (subscription required). "A handful have been vaccinated if they were providing service to long-term care homes, but the bulk have not yet begun to be vaccinated," says Dawn Martin, Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS) CEO. Across the province, pharmacies have begun preparing for phase 2, and more details are being provided daily. "They are used to managing during the flu season so I expect very similar," Martin says. "However, they can't fully prepare until we know what vaccine is coming and what the storage requirements are." As of March 15, over 320 provincial pharmacies have registered to provide emergency vaccinations across the province. Pharmacy registration packages have been sent out to about 385 pharmacies that registered to give vaccinations for the flu season.

ON pharmacies ready to scale up as demand for COVID-19 vaccine grows

Since the COVID-19 vaccination program began last week, pharmacies in the 3 health regions chosen for the pilot have seen a "remarkable response from the public," [reports toronto.com](#). Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) said, "For the most part, it's been a seamless and successful implementation. I think we're certainly ready to scale up and expand when supply dictates." While the rollout continues, OPA is in discussions with the provincial government for new supply to cool the high demand pharmacies have been seeing, Bates said. "If we're full steam ahead, and if we have enough pharmacies (partaking)...we could do a million vaccinations per week," he said. "This is the light at the end of the tunnel."

Pharmacies begin booking vaccine appointments as QC expands rollout

Beginning Monday, March 15, eligible Montrealers were able to book vaccination appointments at their local pharmacy, [says the Montreal Gazette](#). So far, some 370 Montreal pharmacies have agreed to participate in the effort, representing about 80% of all pharmacies in the city. They've spent the last few weeks preparing the premises to safely handle an influx of people, readying staff to administer the vaccine and coordinating with the provincial government to work out online registration. It's been a "whole lot of work" squeezed into a short period of time, said Jean Bourcier of the Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP). Montreal pharmacies are being added first because the city remains the epicentre of the pandemic in Quebec. The government announced March 16 that pharmacies in 4 other regions will join the vaccination efforts in the coming days, with administration of vaccines beginning April 5.

Pharmacists prepare for vaccine rollout in NB

New Brunswickers aged 85 and older can now contact a pharmacist to set up an appointment to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. More than 200 locations across the province are starting to receive shipments this week, primarily of the Moderna vaccine. Nearly every pharmacy in the province

will be participating, according to a [New Brunswick government press release](#). “With an ever-increasing supply of vaccines and new scientific evidence supporting a delay of up to 120 days in administering the vaccine’s second dose, we will be able to complete the work of inoculating all New Brunswickers much more quickly than initially expected,” said Dr. Jennifer Russell, chief medical officer of health. “This is good news. The more people who are immunized, the quicker we will be able to achieve a level of protection in the population.”

MB pharmacies in pilot to administer AstraZeneca vaccine

The Manitoba government is now piloting the distribution of 18,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to pharmacies and medical clinics, the province [announced on March 10](#). Individuals aged 50 to 64 and First Nations people aged 30 to 64 will be the first group eligible to receive the vaccine. People with high-risk conditions (as determined by their doctor or pharmacist) will be prioritized, along with those who meet the age and eligibility criteria set out by the province. The province said that as of March 10, 181 pharmacies have been approved to administer the vaccine, with others expected to be approved as well.

COVID-19 vaccination clinic opens at University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy

A [COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#) at the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy is seen as an integral component of the Region of Waterloo’s vaccine rollout. “I am so proud that the University and our School of Pharmacy are partnering with the Centre for Family Medicine and Region to meet the challenge of vaccinating our community,” said Feridun Hamdullahpur, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Waterloo, in a statement on the university’s website. Over the course of the pandemic, the School of Pharmacy has provided more than just a convenient location for a clinic. Students, alumni, faculty and staff have served patients on the front lines in community pharmacies, hospitals and more. Professor Kelly Grindrod has also been a go-to resource for media, creating popular COVID-19 educational materials, and serves on the Waterloo Region Vaccine Task Force. “The School of Pharmacy has embraced this opportunity to contribute to our local community,” said Andrea Edginton, Hallman director of the School of Pharmacy. I am proud of how we have come together to be a part of the solution.”

National

AstraZeneca vaccine now recommended for those 65 and older in Canada

The committee that makes recommendations on the use of newly approved vaccines in Canada has updated its guidelines on the AstraZeneca-Oxford COVID-19 vaccine and now recommends that it be given to those over the age of 65, [says CBC](#). The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) expanded its recommendations on March 16, stating, “While all available vaccines in Canada are safe and effective, NACI still recommends that in the context of limited vaccine supply, initial doses of mRNA vaccines should be prioritized for those at highest risk of severe illness and death and highest risk of exposure to COVID-19.” Earlier this month the [committee had recommended](#) that Canadians over 65 not receive an AstraZeneca-Oxford shot, while Health Canada, the regulator, had authorized it to be used in adults of all ages.

New poll shows half of Canadians want first COVID-19 vaccine available

A new poll suggests about half of Canadians are willing to get immunized against COVID-19 with the first vaccine they're offered, while one-quarter would be willing to wait to get a shot they'd prefer, [says the Canadian Press](#). In the online survey by Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies, 51% of respondents indicated that they would take whichever of the 4 COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in Canada is made available to them. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau offered reassurances on the safety of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine on March 15 after Germany joined other European countries in pausing its use over reports of blood clots in some recipients. Leger executive vice-president Christian Bourque said that concerns about that vaccine don't seem to be on Canadians' minds. "For now, there's no real major issue exactly (with the AstraZeneca vaccine), but could it in light of what we've seen over the past couple of days? I don't know," Bourque said.

International

US sitting on millions of vaccine doses the world needs

Tens of millions of doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine are sitting idly in American manufacturing facilities, awaiting results from its US clinical trial, while countries that have authorized its use beg for access, [reports the New York Times](#). The fate of those doses is the subject of an intense debate among White House and federal health officials, with some arguing the administration should let them go abroad where they are desperately needed, while others are not ready to relinquish them, according to senior administration officials. AstraZeneca is involved in those conversations. "We understand other governments may have reached out to the US government about donation of AstraZeneca doses, and we've asked the US government to give thoughtful consideration to these requests," said Gonzalo Viña, a spokesperson for AstraZeneca.

Moderna begins testing on its new COVID-19 vaccine candidate

Moderna said on March 15 it had dosed the first participant in an early-stage study of a new COVID-19 vaccine candidate that could potentially be stored and shipped in refrigerators instead of freezers, [according to Reuters](#). The company said its new candidate could make it easier for distribution, especially in developing countries where supply chain issues could hamper vaccination drives. The early-stage study will assess the safety and immunogenicity of the next-generation vaccine, designated as mRNA-1283, at 3 dose levels, and will be given to healthy adults either as a single dose or in 2 doses 28 days apart, the company said. Moderna's first vaccine (mRNA-1273) was approved for use by Health Canada on December 23.

In Depth

Separating fact from fiction on vaccine safety

While there is a lot of noise out there, there is also a clear signal: Coronavirus vaccines are remarkably safe and effective. And the best vaccine is the one you can get into your arm. The

Globe and Mail's André Picard [separates fact from fiction](#).

Who have provinces pegged to receive COVID-19 vaccines in the coming weeks?

As COVID-19 vaccine supplies ramp up across the country, most provinces and territories have released details of who can expect to receive a shot in the coming weeks. Here's a [list of the inoculation plans](#) throughout Canada, many highlighting the role of pharmacists.

This weekly COVID-19 update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. Please note that this publication is meant to inform and is not a comprehensive list of information available. Be sure to check with your provincial regulatory authority or advocacy association for province-specific information. While we aim to ensure all information contained in this update is accurate, the situation is evolving rapidly and CPhA does not take responsibility for the content provided by other organizations and sources.

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