

From: Public & Professional Affairs Department
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April 22, 2020

CPhA

New resource: COVID-19 in patients taking disease-modifying therapy for the management of multiple sclerosis

CPhA has [developed a document](#) outlining general considerations to support pharmacists in the management of patients with multiple sclerosis during COVID-19. A French version will be available soon.

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

Provincial

NS to cover extra dispensing fees for Pharmacare clients

The Nova Scotia government [will now pay extra dispensing fees](#) for Pharmacare clients for refills on prescriptions that would usually be filled for longer periods. For example, the government will cover the second and third refill dispensing fees for prescriptions typically dispensed for 90 days. In March, the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists recommended that pharmacists dispense prescriptions every 30 days that would usually be filled for a longer period of time. This step was taken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to help protect the drug supply and is similar to measures in place in other parts of the country.

OPA podcast addresses Ontario drug supply chain situation

In the latest [Pharmacists' Matters podcast](#), Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) and special guest Daniel Chiasson, president and CEO of the Canadian Association for Pharmacy Distribution Management (CAPDM), discuss Ontario's drug supply chain. Also: insights from a panel of front-line pharmacists and their challenges in the face of COVID-19.

BCPhA organizing group-buy for face shields

The BC Pharmacy Association (BCPhA) is currently [organizing a group purchase](#) for pharmacies looking to source transparent face shields to protect pharmacy teams during the COVID-19 pandemic.

National

Apotex announces donation of hydroxychloroquine to federal government

Apotex, the only Canadian manufacturer of hydroxychloroquine, [announced a donation](#) of 2 million dosages of the medication to the federal government. The company shifted priorities several weeks ago to scale up production and repurpose its plants to manufacture even more hydroxychloroquine, while ensuring Canadians currently being treated with the drug for approved indications have continued access. "Our goal from the outset has been to protect the supply of this product for patients currently using it for approved indications," says Jeff Watson, president and CEO at Apotex. "At the same time, we recognize the importance of building a clinical profile of this medicine to determine its efficacy in treating COVID-19, and we are fortunate to be able to meet both needs."

International

CDC issues guidance on spotting counterfeit respiratory protection equipment

As pharmacists are well aware, acquiring adequate PPE during this pandemic is a challenge. Shortages of critical goods inevitably bring out fraudsters looking to cash in and reports of counterfeit or substandard PPE are emerging. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a [guidance](#) to assist health care workers identify counterfeit respiratory equipment.

FDA approves first at-home COVID-19 test

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, a new [COVID-19 test](#) has been authorized by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). According to [an FDA announcement](#), the new test allows patients to collect their own samples using the Pixel by LabCorp COVID-19 Test home collection kits, which they would then mail to a lab for testing. With a doctor's order, the home collection kits will become available to consumers in most states in the coming weeks, the FDA says.

RPS survey finds 1 in 3 pharmacists unable to access PPE

A [recent survey](#) by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) found that 1 in 3 pharmacists in England cannot obtain continuous supplies of personal protective equipment. The poll of 445 pharmacists also revealed that 94% were unable to maintain distancing of 2 metres from other pharmacy staff due to small spaces and a further 40% reported an inability to maintain a 2 metre distance from patients. "It is essential the government steps up and provides sufficient PPE to enable pharmacists to face the realities of working in a pharmacy during the pandemic," says RPS president Sandra Gidley.

Newsworthy

How are our pharmacists coping?

As one of the first points of contact in the health care system, pharmacists are shoring up the front line during the unprecedented public health emergency that is COVID-19. Yet, like for many others, the virus has transformed the way they are working. The *Irish Times* [spoke to four community pharmacists](#) from across the country to find out how they, their staff and their patients are coping with the outbreak. Their challenges are not so different than those facing pharmacists in Canada.

Worth Repeating

"Pharmacists have been dealing with this for way too long. In terms of trying to find alternatives, working with patients, doing different dosages, so the pandemic certainly hasn't helped with that." — Dawn Martin, CEO, Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan, on how drug shortages in Saskatchewan are nothing new and pharmacists adapt

I didn't know that...

The doctor who is the face of the COVID-19 response in the US, Dr. Anthony Fauci, has pharmacy in his blood. His father was a pharmacist known in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bensonhurst as "Doc." The family lived in an apartment above the pharmacy where his father worked in the back, and his mother and his sister, Denise, worked in the front. "I was delivering prescriptions from the time I was old enough to ride a bike," Fauci remembers.

This daily COVID-19 update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. To unsubscribe, please reply to this email with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.

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