

From: Public & Professional Affairs Department
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Subject: The Daily: CPhA's COVID-19 Update for June 4



June 4, 2020

CPhA

PPE: Suggested best practices for pharmacies updated

CPhA has updated its [suggested best practices on the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\) for pharmacies during COVID-19](#). Changes in this version include considerations for use of non-medical masks/cloth masks/cloth face coverings as a source control measure, additional clarity on applying point-of-care risk assessments to determine when and what PPE is required and the application of these PPE best practices for immunizations, including influenza.

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

Provincial

OPA supports testing in pharmacies, recognizes challenges and need to protect pharmacy professionals and their patients

OPA issued an email to its members last night in reaction to [Premier Ford's statement](#) regarding provincial testing in pharmacies for COVID-19. OPA indicated that they and the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada have been engaging with government in preliminary discussions as part of their proposed 3-point plan to explore ways that the pharmacy profession could potentially support the government in its effort to restart the economy and our collective fight against COVID-19. While point-of-care testing has long been a strategic priority for OPA, the Association acknowledges that testing for COVID-19 may present some challenges that require further input and discussions with members, government and the regulatory body. OPA CEO Justin Bates says that these discussions are still in very early stages and that a lot needs to be discussed to ensure that pharmacy professionals are protected. That said, he goes on to state that testing in pharmacies—for COVID-19 and moving forward for other acute and chronic conditions—is a good idea and an excellent way for pharmacists and technicians, as regulated healthcare professionals, to contribute even more toward public and population health as they have shown with annual flu shots, INR testing and blood glucose monitoring and management.

National

Study links COVID-19 unemployment to suicide

A [new study](#) suggests that the economic upheaval surrounding the virus could result in a spike of as many as 2114 deaths by suicide above the Canadian average by the end of 2021. "We're seeing some of the highest unemployment rates in this country since the early 1980s, we've seen the loss of 15 years of job creation in Canada in only two months," says Dr. Roger McIntyre, professor of psychiatry and pharmacology at the University of Toronto. "The labour contraction, the unemployment and the income insecurity has resulted in an increase in the number of suicides projected in our country."

What does the evidence say? Serological tests for COVID-19

The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) has published [a horizon scan on serological tests](#) for COVID-

19. If accurate, antibody-based serology tests may provide information on who has COVID-19 or who has been infected. Health Canada is actively assessing these tests within the expedited access process. However, the report says, to date, the performance and role of these tests in clinical settings has not been completely demonstrated. Currently, evidence to confirm that individuals have immunity to COVID-19 or are protected from reinfection is lacking.

International

Formal recognition of pharmacies during crisis long overdue: PGA

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PGA) has made a [submission](#) to the Senate Select Committee into the Australian government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic which, while focusing on COVID-19, gives the opportunity to put the pandemic into the context of a coordinated and collaborative response to emergencies and formal recognition of the role pharmacists can play. The PGA has made a number of recommendations, including that community pharmacists be formally recognized to be involved in national emergency and disaster planning and preparedness, and response and recovery measures.

RPS: New guide to help unpaid carers and pharmacy team work together

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) England has joined with Carers Trust and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee to help unpaid carers and pharmacy teams work together to support access to essential medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent weeks, unpaid carers have described a growing range of pressures, including struggling to arrange medicine delivery slots and coping with line-ups resulting from necessary physical distancing measures. This [new guide](#) offers tips to help unpaid carers make the most out of their pharmacy team.

Well-being service for pharmacists under discussion to address 'glaring' gap in support, says minister

Jo Churchill, the minister responsible for public health, primary care and prevention in England, says that the gap in the well-being support offered to pharmacists, compared with other professions, is 'quite glaring' and she is having conversations about a permanent service, [reports The Pharmaceutical Journal](#). The comments may indicate a change of heart in government over extending mental health supports to pharmacists that are already offered to physicians and dentists, after witnessing their contribution during the COVID-19 pandemic. The RPS has been campaigning for better mental health support for pharmacists, with a survey last year revealing 80% were at a 'high' or 'very high' risk of burnout.

RPS calls on pharmacy minister to improve safety

RPS England is calling for all pharmacy teams to be included in support for the workforce to deliver frontline care safely. It [has written](#) Jo Churchill, MP and parliamentary under-secretary of state for health, seeking reassurances and clarifications on 3 key policy areas to protect pharmacy teams and support to look after patients: assurances that pharmacists will have equal access to the new PPE portal, clarification on the new Test and Trace program when staff members may have to self-isolate, and assurances that all staff in pharmacy teams who want an antibody test will be offered one as quickly as possible.

US administration's COVID-19 vaccine plan should use pharmacy's strengths

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) has urged the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed to rely on the proven record of pharmacies and pharmacists for the rapid deployment of COVID-19 vaccines when they are available, [Drug Store News reports](#). "For more than a decade since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, government planning to distribute and administer federally purchased pandemic vaccine to the American public rapidly, efficiently, and safely has included modeling that heavily draws on the strength of chain pharmacies, pharmacists, and private sector distribution channels," NACDS writes.

CDC releases updated guidance for pharmacies

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released [updates](#) to its guidance for pharmacies as the COVID-19 pandemic continues and pharmacists are recognized as an essential part of the health care system. Important updates include the delivery of adult immunizations and other non-COVID clinical care; the use of face coverings by patients, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians; screening patients for fever and COVID-19 symptoms; guidance on PPE; and more. The guidance is an update to the CDC's guidance originally released in early April for pharmacists and pharmacy staff.

Top medical journals raise concerns about data in 2 studies related to COVID-19

Two of the world's leading medical journals, *The Lancet* and *The New England Journal of Medicine*, expressed concern about potential flaws in data produced by a small company to draw major conclusions about COVID-19, [STAT writes](#). One study concluded certain heart drugs are safe, while another found hydroxychloroquine, which was touted by President Trump, is not safe. The concerns highlight larger issues with using big databases to draw conclusions about medicines, an approach that has been gaining favour in the era of big data.

Hydroxychloroquine does not prevent COVID-19 infection if exposed, study says

The malaria drug hydroxychloroquine did not help prevent people who had been exposed to others with COVID-19 from developing the disease, according to the results of an eagerly awaited study that was [published Wednesday in *The New England Journal of Medicine*](#). Despite a lack of evidence, many people began taking the medicine to try to prevent infection early in the COVID-19 pandemic, following anecdotal reports it could be effective and claims by President Trump and conservative commentators. But the new study, the first double-blind randomized, placebo-controlled trial of hydroxychloroquine, found otherwise, [says a report in STAT](#).

This 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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