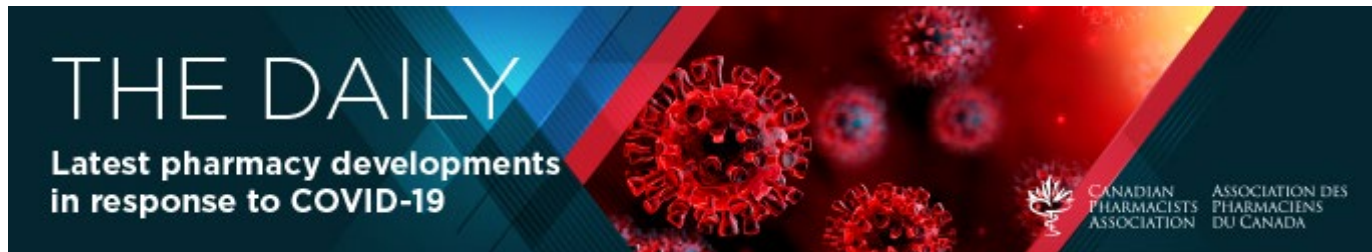


**From:** Public & Professional Affairs Department  
**Sent:** May 4, 2020 5:05 PM  
**Subject:** The Daily: CPhA's COVID-19 Update for May 4



**May 4, 2020**

## **CPhA**

### ***Christine Hrudka named to federal COVID-19 Supply Council***

CPhA board chair Christine Hrudka [has been named](#) to the federal government's [COVID-19 Supply Council](#), which will bring together a diverse group of leaders to provide the government with advice on the procurement of critical goods and services required as part of Canada's COVID-19 response and recovery. The council will provide advice on building innovative and agile supply chains for goods in wide use such as masks, gloves and disinfectants and advice on production, sourcing, shipping and distribution strategies as the situation surrounding COVID-19 continues to evolve.

### ***Stepping Up blog: How are YOU doing?***

It's no surprise that while burn-out and stress-related conditions were common for pharmacists before COVID-19, they've increased significantly since the pandemic hit. Published to kick off Mental Health Week, May 4-10, CPhA chair Christine Hrudka's latest Stepping Up blog post, "[How are you doing?](#)" ([en français](#)) for the Canadian Healthcare Network, is focused on pharmacist mental health and well-being. The post offers some recent polling data of both pharmacists and the public, and outlines some key mental health takeaways from CPhA's recent COVID Conversations webinar.

### ***CPhA launches new mental health tool for pharmacists***

As pharmacists take on greater responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, they are also bearing additional physical and mental stresses as they continue to provide care to their patients. Based on our recent [COVID Conversations webinar](#), the new [Supporting Pharmacists' Mental Health and Wellness During COVID-19](#) practice tool encourages pharmacists to be aware of their own mental health and well-being during these challenging times, and provides practical tips and links to additional resources for support. A French version will be available soon.

CPhA's COVID-19 web pages are being updated regularly at [www.pharmacists.ca/covid19](http://www.pharmacists.ca/covid19) and [www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr](http://www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr).

## **Provincial**

### ***Newfoundland and Labrador eases temporary 30-day supply limits***

In collaboration with the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) and other healthcare partners, the Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board (NLPB) has decided to [ease away from the 30-day supply recommendation](#) over the next 2 weeks. The temporary measure was made purely in the best interest of the public's health and safety. NLPB is pleased to report that due to a nationwide effort to protect drug supply, medication inventories appear to be stabilizing and returning to pre-pandemic quantities. Part of the ongoing assessment NLPB has been doing surrounding the 30-day supply recommendation has been based on information received from regular meetings with Health Canada, drug manufacturers associations and distributors. At this point, information suggests that the national drug supply is stabilizing and will continue to improve over the

next 2 to 4 weeks.

## National

### **Concerns around swabs leads to COVID-19 rapid test recall**

An Ottawa biotech company is voluntarily recalling a rapid test for COVID-19 after Health Canada expressed concern about its effectiveness, dealing a setback to expanded testing in the country. [Spartan Bioscience said yesterday](#) that the concerns centre around the proprietary swab used in the test, but that the Health Canada report released Friday did not raise concerns about the accuracy of the test reagents and portable analyzer device. The company said it would recall the 5500 tests shipped nationally and work on additional clinical studies to assess the sampling method and swab.

### **Clinical trial looking at the potential use of convalescent plasma to treat COVID-19**

Health Canada [issued an advisory](#) reminding Canadians that health products as potential treatments for COVID-19 must first be shown to be safe and effective. While some patients, their families and physicians are requesting that convalescent plasma be made available to treat COVID-19 in Canada, convalescent plasma has not been authorized as a treatment option. This means that the safety and effectiveness of convalescent plasma for treating COVID-19 have not been fully demonstrated at this time.

### **Alert: Hand sanitizers that look like drinks**

The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) Canada has [issued a safety bulletin](#) warning consumers of the dangers of hand sanitizers being mistaken for beverages. The bulletin comes after a report from a concerned consumer about a hand sanitizer being sold in a grocery store, packaged in a 2-litre bottle typically used for drinks. In this time of shortages across the country, many companies have taken up the call to manufacture hand sanitizers, so there is greater access to these products. There is a risk that hand sanitizer will be swallowed by accident by an adult or child when it is provided in containers that are usually used for drinks such as soda, water and alcoholic beverages.

## International

### **Ireland flu fight should start now, advise pharmacists**

Ireland needs to devise and deploy a robust plan to combat flu and prevent it from overwhelming the health system next season. This [call was issued](#) by the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU), which says that the time for planning is now and that a central pillar should be making the seasonal flu vaccine available to everyone for free this autumn. Speaking about the importance of planning for seasonal flu, IPU vice-president and community pharmacist Eoghan Hanly says, "As a society we have all learned a lot about epidemiology and health over the past few weeks. Previously alien concepts such as 'social distancing', 'community transmission' and 'herd immunity' are now well understood. We must now seize the opportunity presented by these greater levels of public understanding and step up the fight against the perennial problem of seasonal flu."

### **NIH study: how to sanitize N95 masks for reuse**

Exposing contaminated N95 respirators to vaporized hydrogen peroxide (VHP) or ultraviolet (UV) light appears to eliminate the COVID-19 virus from the material and preserve the integrity of the masks' fit for up to 3 uses, a [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) study shows](#). Dry heat (70° C) was also found to eliminate the virus on masks, but was shown to retain effectiveness for only 2 uses instead of 3. Robert Fischer with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Hamilton, Montana, and colleagues posted the findings on a pre-print server. The paper has not yet been peer reviewed.

### **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme restrictions eased during pandemic crisis**

The Australian government is [implementing a temporary measure](#) that allows flexibility around Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) restrictions for eligible PBS medicines to ensure continued treatment during the COVID-19 crisis. From May 1, when a treating medical professional considers that a patient taking an eligible PBS medicine should be exempt from any specific Authority Required PBS restriction, a request for exemption for that restriction requirement will be able to be lodged with Services Australia (Medicare). This request can be submitted if the medical professional considers that the patient may

otherwise be at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 or the restriction cannot be completed due to social distancing or isolation requirements.

### ***FDA to allow emergency use of remdesivir***

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [announced](#) that it would permit emergency use of remdesivir, the antiviral medicine from Gilead Sciences, to treat patients with COVID-19. The decision to issue an emergency use authorization was based on positive results from a government-conducted clinical trial announced Wednesday that [showed remdesivir accelerated the recovery time](#) of patients with COVID-19 compared to a placebo and from a study conducted by Gilead that studied 2 different treatment durations of the medicine. At the same time, the government’s top infectious disease expert cautioned that the drug was not a “knockout.”

## **Newsorthy**

### ***Three potential futures for COVID-19***

As epidemiologists attempt to scope out what COVID-19 has in store for the US this summer and beyond, several potential futures have been suggested, differing in how often and how severely the no-longer-new coronavirus continues to wallop humankind, [STAT reports](#). But while these scenarios diverge on key details—how much transmission will decrease over the summer, for instance, and how many people have already been infected (and possibly acquired immunity)—they almost unanimously foresee a world that, even when the current outbreak temporarily abates, looks and feels nothing like the world of just 3 months ago.

## **Worth Repeating**

“So much got shunted to the pharmacies. Pharmacies weren’t considered as part of the health-care system. They’re almost considered like a business without realizing that when you close many of the family doctor clinics, family doctors still provide services via telemedicine, but they’re not open necessarily for walk-ins and their patients don’t know how to track them down.”  
— University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy professor, Kelly Grindrod, in a [Global News story](#) exploring COVID-19 lessons for the future, on governments’ failure to consider the importance of pharmacies during the pandemic.

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.

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.