

**From:** Public & Professional Affairs Department  
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**May 7, 2020**

## **CPhA**

### ***CPhA releases bilingual national survey of community pharmacists on drug supply issues***

In a recent survey, community pharmacists indicated that drug shortages are among their top concerns during COVID-19. From increased demand to disruptions along the supply chain, including wholesaler allocation strategies, pharmacists may be facing uncertainty and volatility of the drug supply. We are asking community pharmacists to answer a brief survey to help us better understand the drug supply challenges being faced at the pharmacy level. The results will help inform our continued work with government and stakeholders along the supply chain to support pharmacists in drug supply management. The survey closes at **11:59 pm ET on May 11**. You can **complete the survey in [English](#) or [French](#)**.

*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**

### ***Operation Spreading Happiness delivers cookies and smiles in Nova Scotia***

The Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia (PANS) wanted to do a little something to let pharmacy teams across the province know how much they are appreciated. [Operation Spreading Happiness](#) took place on May 7, when PANS volunteers delivered a total 4332 cookies to every community and hospital pharmacy team in Nova Scotia. The treats were meant to bring smiles to the faces of these hard-working professionals dealing with so much additional stress and tragedy — it looks like it worked!

## **National**

### ***Canadians' stress levels increasing during coronavirus pandemic: survey***

Consistent or constant stress has been felt by more than twice as many Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic as before it, according to [a new survey from Nanos Research](#). The survey of 1049 Canadians in late April was commissioned by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Results found that 13% of respondents reported feeling stressed "all the time" that month, while only 4% said they felt that level of stress before the pandemic. Another 33% said they were feeling stress "regularly" in April, while only 17% said that was the case a month earlier.

### ***Health Canada warns against improperly using hand sanitizers, household cleaning products***

Health Canada is [warning Canadians](#) about the risks of improperly using hand sanitizers, disinfectants, household cleaning products and bleaches, and reminding them to always read and follow the directions on product labels. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an increased demand for, and use of, these products and there have been several reports of unintentional poisonings from improper use. Between February and March of this year, poison centres across Canada received 58% more cases of people being poisoned by or exposed to hand sanitizers, disinfectants, household cleaning products and bleaches, compared with the same period last year.

## International

### ***A nation seeking security needs pharmacists as COVID-19 testers***

In a [CEO blog post](#), Thomas Menighan, executive vice president and CEO of the American Pharmacist Association (APhA), says that because accessibility is one of the main advantages of full use of pharmacists in the health care system, pharmacists and COVID-19 testing are a natural combination. “We need more tests, and we need more testing sites—and we need them fast.. leveraging pharmacists and pharmacies is a clear path to achieving this. Never has our quest to be ‘on the team and in the game’ been more urgent.”

### ***Pepcid added to FDA list of drug shortages***

Just over a week after a report that it was being tested in high intravenous doses as a potential treatment for COVID-19 patients, Pepcid, which is used to treat ulcers, acid reflux and heartburn, has been added to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) list of drug shortages, [Bloomberg News reports](#). Drug makers, including Teva Pharmaceutical, Carlsbad Technology and Aurobindo Pharma, reported increased demand for famotidine tablets, the generic name for Pepcid.

### ***Drug maker to ensure remdesivir availability***

Amid questions about access to remdesivir for COVID-19 patients, Gilead Sciences is pursuing several steps to ensure the medicine is supplied to countries beyond the US, [STAT says](#). The drug maker has indicated its plans to issue voluntary licenses with “leading chemical and pharmaceutical” manufacturers to produce remdesivir for Europe, Asia and the developing world through 2022. Similarly, negotiations are under way to issue licenses to several generic drug makers in India and Pakistan in order to supply the drug to developing countries.

### ***Giving blood thinners to severely ill COVID-19 patients is gaining ground***

New observational data shows that treating COVID-19 patients with medicines to prevent blood clots might help reduce deaths in patients on ventilators. A team from Mount Sinai Health System in New York reported better results for hospitalized COVID-19 patients who received anticoagulant drugs compared to patients who didn’t. The data are preliminary and require confirmation in larger studies with a more robust design, the authors say about [their study](#) published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, but their findings add weight to medical guidelines.

### ***Vaccine projects in the works***

Sanofi plans to enrol thousands of subjects globally for trials of an experimental coronavirus vaccine that it is developing with GlaxoSmithKline, and it has started to discuss advanced purchases with several countries, [Reuters reports](#). Sanofi is working on 2 vaccine projects to prevent COVID-19 and is exploring several manufacturing options, including fresh collaborations to ensure it can meet demand if either program is successful.

### ***Funding to move Scottish prisoners from methadone to buvidal***

In a [series of measures](#) designed to assist those affected by drug use during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish government has announced that prisoners in Scotland will be moved from the drug methadone to buvidal. The measures specifically include £1.9 million to support people in prison on prescribed opiate substitution treatment (OST) to switch to a new, longer-acting form called buvidal and widening the availability of overdose reversal drug naloxone while measures to tackle COVID-19 remain in place.

## Newsworthy

### ***Pharmacists receiving short shipments as drug shortage continues***

According to the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) in a [Canadian Press article](#), ongoing drug shortages are leaving pharmacies across the country to adjust to short shipments on the fly. The association first warned of the possibility of shortages in early March when supply chains for ingredients and finished medications were disrupted by COVID-19 in China. While Canada has seen a spike in shortages since then, it hasn't developed into the emergency situation some health officials

had feared. The fact that everyone is still getting some form of the medication they need is likely an indication that drug-rationing measures are working, says Barry Power, senior director of digital content at CPhA. In March the association recommended pharmacies restrict the amount of drugs they dispense to a 30-day supply per patient. "It's cut back on the demand for things. So I think there has been definitely a positive impact on making sure that people are still able to get their medications. Maybe not the quantities they want, but they are able to get it," Power says.

### **Worth Repeating**

"We've always been an important part of an accessible health-care profession that people can call up and visit, but now, in addition to the regular questions, we're getting new questions about masks or hydroxychloroquine or the ability to transfer a prescription." — Keith Shaw, pharmacy district manager with Sobeys and the president of BCPhA, [on the demands on pharmacy services](#) during COVID-19

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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