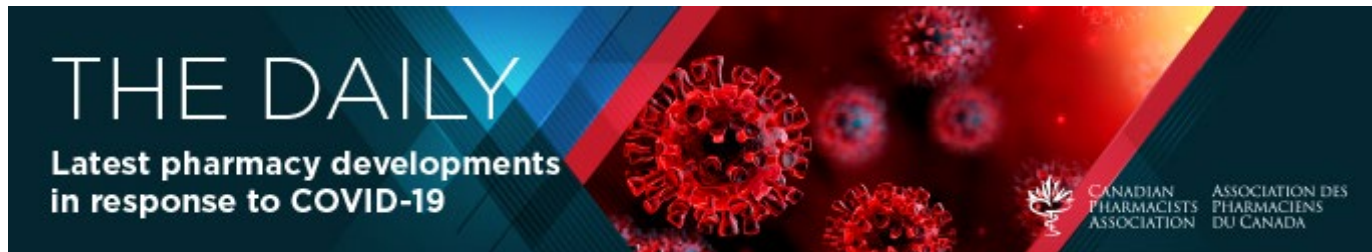


From: Public & Professional Affairs Department
Sent: May 8, 2020 4:06 PM
Subject: The Daily: CPhA's COVID-19 Update for May 8



May 8, 2020

CPhA

National survey of community pharmacists on drug supply issues: Share your experiences by May 11

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 and www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr.

Provincial

Manitoba lifts 1-month limit on prescription refills

The Manitoba government is lifting the 1-month limit on prescription refills beginning Monday, May 11. Manitoba health minister Cameron Friesen [announced](#) that Manitobans with prescriptions for long-term medications will be able to fill them as per their prescriber's direction as long as the medication isn't impacted by shortages. He stated that the province will use the federal drug shortages website to inform decisions on which drugs will remain limited to a 1-month fill and that the province is creating a COVID-19 drug shortage working group, made up of government officials and representatives from Pharmacists Manitoba and the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba. The role of the group will be to survey and monitor drug availability in Manitoba and Canada, in order to come up with solutions to ongoing drug shortages. It will also solicit input and proposals from industry, stakeholder groups and health-related associations to help make decisions.

National

Health Canada issues warning about unauthorized COVID-19 test kits

Health Canada [issued a warning](#) to Canadians yesterday not to buy home diagnostic test kits, including mail-in sample collection kits, claiming to diagnose or detect COVID-19 because they may provide inaccurate or false results. "These products have not been authorized by Health Canada, which means they have not been reviewed for safety, quality or effectiveness," the federal ministry said in a statement. However, Health Canada says it has authorized COVID-19 test kits intended for use only by health care professionals or trained operators.

Manufacturer of cystic fibrosis drug offers it for free during pandemic if feds negotiate on pricing

A pharmaceutical company that makes life-saving drugs for cystic fibrosis patients has offered to provide their medications for free during the pandemic if the Canadian government negotiates proposed changes to the country's drug-pricing system. The

American biopharmaceutical company Vertex Pharmaceuticals manufactures a breakthrough drug called Trikafta, which can significantly help people living with cystic fibrosis. In an effort to secure access to the medication, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Treatment Society (CCFTS) appealed to Vertex Pharmaceuticals to provide access to CF patients during the COVID-19 pandemic because they are particularly vulnerable to the virus. In response, the company has offered to provide the medication for free to every patient with CF in Canada for 90 days, but only if the Canadian government begins negotiations.

Health Canada approvals slow for PPE, say manufacturers

With personal protective equipment in short supply in the battle against COVID-19, many Canadian manufacturers have retooled and begun producing hand sanitizer, gowns, masks, face shields and ventilators. But despite the great need on the part of health care facilities, many are reporting being tied up in red tape as they seek approvals from the federal government for the sale of their products, [reports the National Post](#). Health Canada's stamp of approval involves obtaining a [Medical Device Establishment Licence](#) (MDEL), which costs \$4590. As of April 27, Health Canada says it has expedited the issuance of over 750 MDELs related to products such as masks, gowns and respirators, with approximately 450 applications remaining.

International

IPU reports 10% decrease in prescriptions for oral contraception during COVID-19

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) [is reporting](#) a 10% decrease in prescriptions for oral contraception compared to the same period last year. Community pharmacist and IPU executive committee member Caitriona O'Riordan says there could be a number of reasons why fewer women are currently accessing the pill. "Some may be wary of moving around and visiting a pharmacy, while others may have already finished their six-month prescription and don't realise that pharmacists can currently extend this. We want to reassure everyone that pharmacies are open and operating as normal; they have also put in place stringent physical distancing measures to ensure there is no risk to patients," she says.

FDA cuts number of China mask makers approved for N95 masks

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has [cut the number of mask makers in China](#) that are approved to make N95-type masks for US health care workers to 14 from 80, the [Wall Street Journal reported](#), citing an interview with an unnamed FDA official. The move comes after state officials and the regulator found many imported N95 masks did not meet US standards. In some cases, tests found 60% of 67 different kinds of imported masks allowed in more tiny particles in at least 1 sample than the US standards allow.

New temporary guidelines on non-standard PPE practices for sterile compounding

According to [Pharmacy Times](#), the FDA has released new temporary guidelines on non-standard personal protective equipment (PPE) practices for sterile compounding by pharmacy compounders during the COVID-19 pandemic. The temporary policy is intended to remain in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency declared by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The guidance was intended to clarify current policies in regard to PPE use during human drug compounding at state-licensed pharmacies or federal facilities that are not registered with the FDA as outsourcing facilities, which are referred to collectively in the guidance as compounders.

Japan approves remdesivir for COVID-19 treatment

Japan has approved Gilead's remdesivir as a treatment for COVID-19, making it the country's first officially authorized drug for the disease, according to [Reuters](#). The Japanese health ministry reached the decision just three days after the company filed for approval. Remdesivir was granted authorization last week by the FDA for emergency use in hospitals in the US.

Everyday hygiene essential to help prevent the spread of infections

A new [Position Paper](#) published in the *American Journal of Infection Control* online reports that improved everyday hygiene practices, such as handwashing, can help to significantly reduce the risk of common infections by up to 50%. With the increased hygiene efforts being deployed to slow the spread of COVID-19, the Global Hygiene Council's (GHC) [public health experts are now calling](#) for even greater attention to improved hygiene behaviour in homes and communities to help reduce the spread of

infection.

US government criticized for uneven distribution of remdesivir

Hospitals and physicians around the country are sharply criticizing the US federal government for the uneven and opaque way it is distributing its supply of remdesivir, [STAT reports](#). About 24 hospitals are believed to have been chosen to receive the drug so far, but clinicians are unclear on why some medical centres have been chosen to receive doses while others have not, and who is making those decisions in the first place.

Newsworthy

Hydroxychloroquine fails to help hospitalized coronavirus patients in US funded study

A study has found that hydroxychloroquine, a decades-old malaria drug, did not appear to help hospitalized patients with COVID-19, [CNBC says](#). The observational study looked at 1376 consecutive patients who arrived at the emergency room with symptoms of COVID-19. Nearly 60%, or 811 of the patients, received the drug within 48 hours and were found, on average, to be more severely ill than those not given the drug. The findings did not find any potential benefit or harm from the drug.

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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