



# The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

**April 13, 2022**

**CPhA**

## ***CPhA reacts to Budget 2022***

The 2022 federal budget, which was tabled on April 7, includes health-care investments in the areas of public health, mental health, opioids, Indigenous health, dental care and pharmacare. Pharmacists are the most knowledgeable health-care providers when it comes to drug coverage, and CPhA is actively advocating for them to be at the table to provide this essential input on the implementation of national pharmacare programs. CPhA is [pleased to see](#) further investment to address the opioid crisis through harm reduction, treatment and prevention at the community level, expanded eligible health-care providers under the Student Loan Forgiveness Program for health workers who practice in rural and remote communities, and funding to support foreign credential recognition for the health sector, which will help international pharmacy graduates navigate and integrate into Canadian pharmacy practice here. However, the pandemic has taken a significant toll on pharmacists and other health-care providers, and Budget 2022 falls short in providing much needed investment in mental health resources and support for our health-care workers.

## ***CPhA CPO featured in podcast on the future of health care***

In partnership with the People Before Patients health-care reform movement, Teva Canada has launched [a series of podcasts](#) featuring health-care thought leaders who share their vision of a future health-care system that supports patients and caregivers in all stages of life. Dr. Danielle

Paes, chief pharmacist officer (CPO) at CPhA, is featured in an episode from April 12. “I am so excited to be part of this important conversation about what the future of Canada’s health care should look like from all perspectives,” Paes said. “It’s about leading change with an understanding of our common humanity and a desire to collaborate on our health journey.”

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## **Pharmacists on the front line**

### ***Vancouver Island pharmacy’s 25th anniversary marred by social media scam***

To celebrate his pharmacy’s 25th anniversary in Campbell River, BC, Joe Myers thought he would hold a social media giveaway—something they do regularly on the pharmacy’s Facebook page—but it wasn’t long before he started getting phone calls from patients saying that something wasn’t quite right, [Saanich News reports](#). “It was going very well for a few days, and then we just started getting all these calls from our patients asking us if we were asking for their credit card information. We realized it was a scam,” he said. “Someone had . . . copied our actual Facebook page, they copied the photos that we had of our celebration, me in 1997, the picture of our store, everything was exactly like we had it. Then they said, ‘Congratulations you won the prize!’” Joe’s Pharmacy has since awarded the prize and has told followers to disregard any communications received about the competition. They have also complained to Facebook, who, according to Myers, said the fake page did not meet the company’s standards for it to be taken down. “It’s just infuriating that they used our whole image and trust that we have in the community, to pull off this scam and they’ve gotten away with it,” Myers said.

### ***Yorkton, SK, pharmacy selected as small business of the year***

The Yorkton Medicine Shoppe was selected as the Small Business of the Year by the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce at the Celebrate Success Awards, [according to SaskToday](#). “I was a finalist in 2 categories—for customer service and community involvement,” said Tricia Klassen, owner/operator of the pharmacy. “From all of the eligible finalists they choose a small business of the year, and so I was chosen for that category.” Klassen grew up in Esterhazy and went on to further her education at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon where she graduated from the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition in 2004. As well as providing health-care services to the community, Klassen said the pharmacy sponsors multiple organizations. “We focus on both physical and mental health in the community, so we support Yorkton Minor Hockey, Senior Curling League . . . [and] we also sponsor York Lake Golf Course,” she said. “Every year, with the exception of last year, we do a mental health walk in conjunction with SIGN (Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours) and their walk-in counselling clinic,” Klassen added.

### ***Ottawa pharmacist says there’s little demand for a fourth COVID-19 shot***

As more people become eligible for a fourth dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, one Ottawa pharmacy owner says there has not been much demand for the vaccine, despite it being readily available, [according to CTV](#). “I’ve been a little bit disappointed, hoping to see more people coming in,” said Lubna Fawaz, the owner of ProMed Pharmacy. Fawaz says fewer than 20 people have come in for the dose since residents 60 and older became eligible March 31. “Our wait is no time, so we

always welcome walk-ins,” said Fawaz. “We used to be going crazy with phone calls, but not now.” Experts say fourth doses will help blunt the sixth wave, which is expected to peak in May. “Fourth doses accepted by enough people will blunt transmission into the community, which is what we want to curtail the peak and the extent of the sixth wave,” said Dr. Raywat Deonandan, an epidemiologist and associate professor at the University of Ottawa.

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## Provincial

### ***First ever paid prescription fentanyl program launches in Vancouver***

A first-of-its-kind program is making powdered fentanyl available by paid prescription in Vancouver, [according to CBC](#). Dr. Christy Sutherland, medical director for PHS Community Services Society, the organization running the program, said the goal is to meet substance users where they are at, instead of administering alternatives like Dilaudid that patients may not find helpful. “The common feedback we had from patients was that they would prefer fentanyl, that we needed to match what they were buying from the drug dealer in order to get them away from that street supply,” she said. The “enhanced access” program at PHS starts with a robust intake regime, Dr. Sutherland said, including a nurse who works with the patient to determine the correct dosage and prescription. The patient then takes that prescription to a pharmacy, pays for the fentanyl just like any other medication, takes it home and uses it on their own schedule.

### ***New proposed regulations will allow Ontario pharmacists to prescribe for minor ailments***

New proposed regulations in Ontario will allow pharmacists to prescribe medication for 12 minor ailments. These proposed regulations have a public consultation window of 10 days before proceeding to cabinet for final approval. Nardine Nakhla is a pharmacist and professor at the University of Waterloo and served as a member of an advisory group that provided input on the regulations. Nakhla [explains](#) what this change means for Ontarians.

### ***Cold and flu medication in short supply at some Ontario pharmacies***

Pharmacists are reporting an increased demand for cold and flu medications as Ontario makes its way through a sixth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. That’s making some medications harder to find, said Jen Belcher, a pharmacist at Loyalist Pharmacy in Amherstview, Ontario. “We’re having a hard time replenishing our shelves,” she [told CBC](#). Compound that with cold, flu and allergy season, and it’s a perfect storm for the bare or near empty shelves, said Belcher, who also represents the Ontario Pharmacists Association. Since the lifting of the mask mandates on March 21, she said pharmacies in the province are seeing a spike of people “looking to treat symptoms of upper respiratory tract infections, whether it’s due to COVID-19, influenza or the common cold.” A number of medications are on backorder, Belcher said, and while some are expected to be back in stock in the next few weeks, those dates are tentative and could change. Belcher said the masking requirement was put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but also limited the spread of the cold and flu.

### ***Do your research now in case you need Paxlovid later, says UW pharmacy prof***

As eligibility for COVID-19 antiviral medications opens up in Ontario, an associate professor of pharmacy at the University of Waterloo says now is the time to get ready in case you wind up needing the therapy. That means checking to see if you belong to a high-risk group that can now be tested and assessed for antivirals such as Paxlovid, Kelly Grindrod [told CBC](#) this week. Another good idea, Grindrod said, is to prepare a list of the other medications you're already on. She noted Paxlovid is "a complicated drug to use" because it can cause several drug interactions, and it takes time for physicians and pharmacists to adjust a patient's other medications to account for it.

### ***Atlantic Canada's pharmacists want more responsibilities to ease burden on hospitals***

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the value of pharmacies in the health-care system, but they can do even more to help ease the burden on Atlantic Canada's hospitals, say pharmacists across the region, [the Canadian Press reports](#). With lengthy emergency room wait times across Atlantic Canada and a family doctor shortage, pharmacist associations are advocating for public funding so their members can treat ailments within their scope of care. They said they would also like to see pharmacists take on a larger role in chronic-care management, particularly for people with diabetes or hypertension.

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## **National**

### ***Shoppers Drug Mart tops list of most reputable companies in Canada***

Leger unveiled the results of its [2022 Reputation study](#), which ranks the companies Canadians find most reputable based on a survey of more than 38 000 people on the opinions and awareness toward 285 companies. Shoppers Drug Mart (SDM) came out on top of this year's list, followed by Sony and Samsung, but the bigger story, according to Leger, is the ongoing decline in the "reputation score" the firm calculates as part of the process, which had been trending down even for top performers. SDM, for example, led the list with a score of 73 this year, whereas the leader in 2013, Google, had scored a 91. Dave Scholz, executive vice president at Leger, [told the Financial Post](#) that while it would be convenient to blame the pandemic for the shift, it is a trend his firm has noticed for the better part of a decade. "We're seeing a general erosion of what we [call] 'reputation', and trust is a component of that," Scholz said. "We're seeing across the board people aren't believing what they hear. They're not as connected as they once were and a large part of that comes from misinformation, disinformation, our new anger with the media to a certain degree ... [and] our fatigue when it comes to communication."

### ***NACI recommends boosters for all adults as virus resurges***

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is now strongly recommending that all adults and immunocompromised children aged 12 to 17 get a first COVID-19 booster shot as Canada experiences a resurgence of the virus, [CBC reports](#). NACI previously said that boosters for those 2 groups should be considered discretionary. Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam said booster shots will offer stronger protection as case loads increase. "It doesn't matter

where you are in Canada right now. I would advise getting that booster shot,” Tam told a press conference on April 12. While NACI is “strongly recommending” boosters for immunocompromised children, all children aged 12 to 17 can be offered a booster dose. Dr. Tam said the recent surge across Canada has been driven by the Omicron variant and its BA.2 subvariant. “We are seeing that resurgence, whether you call it the sixth wave or however many waves there is in your local jurisdiction, it is a resurgence,” she said. “And that is why it’s important to get that booster now.”

### ***Budget 2022: IMC pleased with ongoing commitments to increased access to innovative medicines***

“Innovative Medicines Canada is pleased with the ongoing commitments to increased access to innovative medicines and treatments for all Canadians, and to the life sciences sector in Budget 2022,” Pamela Fralick, the president of IMC, said [in a news release](#). “It’s critical for any pharmacare program to build on the strengths of our current dual-payer model, while focusing on improving access for the uninsured and underinsured.” The group also looks forward to the next phase in the development of a national strategy on drugs for rare diseases. During initial consultations, IMC emphasized the need for the federal government to work collaboratively with provinces, industry and other stakeholders to create a value-based, pan-Canadian model that provides patients with timely access to new treatments. Continued strategic investment, not only in biomanufacturing, but also through a comprehensive life sciences strategy, is needed for Canada’s pharmaceutical industry to attract global investment while ensuring the health and well-being of Canadians for years to come.

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## **International**

### ***US: FDA mulls drug importation with states***

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has started discussions with states over creating a way to import drugs from Canada—a policy the Biden and Trump administrations both embraced to bring down health costs, but which experts regard as having limited impact, [according to Axios](#). With President Biden’s drug pricing agenda stalled, importation could allow states to take advantage of lower drug prices abroad without the need for direct action to limit prices in the U.S. Last week, the FDA held its first meeting with 5 states—Florida, Colorado, Vermont, Maine and New Mexico—that have submitted reimportation plans or are thinking about doing so. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America sued to block a 2020 federal rule that would facilitate importation, citing patient safety and other concerns. Canada also said it has no plans to participate and has told drugmakers not to take steps that could lead to drug shortages there.

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## **Worth Repeating**

“In many places, much as during the COVID pandemic, the only places that are available for Ukrainian people are the pharmacy and their grocery store,” she says. “And those 2 things, plus

the soldiers making sure they are open. It does take effort, but that's part of our job.” —Catherine Duggan, CEO of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), [commenting](#) on the vital work pharmacists do in conflict areas

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This weekly update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. 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.

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