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Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

June 14, 2023

CPhA

Survey of IPGs and the pharmacist licensure process in Canada

CPhA is hoping to better understand the experiences of international pharmacy graduates (IPGs) within the Canadian pharmacist licensure process. We've developed a survey intended for IPGs who are either licensed as pharmacists in Canada, going through the licensure process, or no longer planning to become licensed pharmacists in Canada. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. While this is a longer survey, the information we collect will help us identify how we can better support IPGs and work with the pharmacy community to address barriers to licensure. To show our appreciation for your time and input, all IPGs who complete the survey will be entered into a draw to win 1 of 3 cash prizes of \$100 each (excluding residents of Quebec). Take the survey in [English](#) or [French](#) by July 15.

June is National Indigenous History Month

June is [National Indigenous History Month](#) (NIHM)—a time to learn about and celebrate the rich history, cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, while also recognizing the ongoing trauma and harm experienced by Indigenous Peoples and building a path toward reconciliation.

Here's an overview of how CPhA and the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada (IPPC) are marking the month:

- **IPPC: A year in review** – Hear from CEO Amy Lamb about the [highlights from IPPC's first year](#) and what's next.
- **Indigenous Pharmacy Scholarship** – [Applications](#) for the 2023/2024 academic year are being accepted until June 15.
- **Pharmacy Check-Ins** – We recently caught up with several Indigenous pharmacy professionals to talk about pharmacy practice and providing safe, inclusive health care to Indigenous communities. Meet [Fanny Fiddler](#), [Kalbie Hokanson](#), [Cassandra McLelland](#), [Sasha Merasty](#) and [Jaris Swidrovich](#).
- **Orange shirts for pharmacy professionals** – [Pre-order an "Every Child Matters" shirt](#) designed specifically for pharmacy professionals by July 1 to receive it by September.
- **Updated resource round-up** – Our [Indigenous Health Resource Round-up](#) has been updated with information and resources to help you provide accessible and inclusive care to Indigenous patients.
- **Upcoming webinar on understanding the Indigenous experience** – Join us on Monday, June 19 from 5:00–6:00 pm ET for the first session in CPhA's new IDEA Dialogues series designed to highlight diverse voices and explore Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Affirmation (IDEAs) in pharmacy. In this session, you'll hear from a panel of Indigenous pharmacy professionals about their experiences from both sides of the pharmacy counter. [Register now](#).

For more information about NIHM and how you can get involved, check out our [webpage](#) and follow IPPC on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Pride Month: Resources to help you provide safe and inclusive care

Happy Pride Month! Let's stand together with the 2SLGBTQ+ community every day by providing accessible, gender-affirming and inclusive pharmacy care.

Check out our [Resource Round-up](#) for some resources and practice tools to help. Stay tuned for new practice content coming this month!

New federal funding for primary care training announced, includes pharmacist training project

On June 8, the federal government [announced](#) an investment of \$45.3 million in grant funding for *Team Primary Care: Training for Transformation*—an initiative designed to build the capacity of interprofessional, comprehensive primary care practitioners working in teams through improved training, retention and planning tools. *Team Primary Care*, co-led by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Canadian Health Workforce Network, is collaborating with over 100 partners to develop over 40 practitioner-specific primary care team training projects. One of the projects, [Pharmacist Training for Comprehensive Primary Care](#), will support pharmacist training and aim to increase the number of advanced primary care-based pharmacy leaders as clinicians and educators. CPhA is thrilled to work with the Association of Faculties of Pharmacy (project lead) and the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists on this project that will further strengthen the growing primary care role Canada's pharmacists are playing.

Pharmacy on the front lines

Pharmacist says BC can save money—and patients from pain—with free shingles vaccines

A vaccine advocate says it's time for British Columbia to publicly fund the shingles vaccine to save patients from needless pain and the health-care system from needless expense. Ajit Johal, a pharmacist and clinical director with vaccine promotion and education effort Immunize.io, [told CBC](#) that the condition, which causes a blistering skin rash and can lead to long-term pain for some patients, can largely be prevented or made less severe with a 2-dose vaccine treatment. The problem, he said, is the shots are not covered by the province and even extended benefit plans are hit-or-miss. The lack of coverage is a financial barrier for some, as the doses can cost over \$300. But Johal said treatment of shingles costs the health-care system much more. "I think we need to use every tool at our disposal to limit the impact on primary care, and shingles as a disease has an incredible burden on both individuals

and the system,” he said. “So having a vaccination program using the great resources we put in place is a win for patients and certainly a win for the health-care system.”

Provincial

BC pharmacists did 891 patient assessments on first day of new prescribing powers

On June 1, the first day new prescribing powers took effect, BC pharmacists did 891 patient assessments they couldn't have done before, according to the province's PharmaCare program. Changes allowing them to diagnose and prescribe medications for 21 minor ailments—including shingles, acne and urinary tract infections—as well as prescribe contraception, have been “many, many years in the making,” Pindy Janda, the vice-president of the BC Pharmacy Association, [told Global News](#). The most in-demand services on June 1 were for allergies, urinary tract infections, contraception, pink eye and dermatitis, or skin irritations, none of which came as a surprise, Janda added. “What do they all have in common? You want an answer quickly,” she said. The advantage of bringing pharmacists into the fold is better access, Janda said, noting that many pharmacies are open 24 hours a day or late into the evening, long past the business hours of many clinics. As of last week, more than three-quarters of eligible community pharmacists had completed the training required to assess and prescribe for minor ailments in more than 400 pharmacies.

Ontario to stop free COVID-19 rapid test program in pharmacies

An Ontario program that distributes free rapid tests (RATs) for COVID-19 at grocery stores and pharmacies will end after this month, [the Canadian Press reports](#). “With the lower rates of COVID-19, high vaccination rates, and demand for RATs consistently decreasing, the province will be winding down its RAT programs on June 30, 2023,” the Ministry of Health wrote in a memo to the retailers. “As a result, distribution of free RATs through the program will end and any agreements with your organization with respect to the program will expire.” A spokesperson for Health Minister Sylvia Jones said that demand from the retailers last June was 3.9 million tests a week, and this month it is

expected to be about 325 000 tests per week. The ministry is encouraging grocery stores and pharmacies to place final orders by June 16.

National

Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines can be used for primary vaccination series, NACI says

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has said bivalent mRNA vaccines can be used as the 2-dose primary series of shots against COVID-19, [the Canadian Press reports](#). That means anyone who has not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19, including infants aged 6 months and over, can receive the bivalent formulations developed to target the Omicron variant. The bivalent vaccines, manufactured by Moderna and by Pfizer-BioNTech, have previously been used only as booster shots for people 5 years of age and older. NACI posted the new interim guidance online on June 9. The statement noted the supply of the original monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will no longer be available in Canada in the coming months.

Childhood immunization rates stayed same during first part of pandemic: StatCan

A Statistics Canada survey shows routine childhood immunization rates stayed about the same during the first part of the COVID-19 pandemic, [the Canadian Press reports](#). The Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey, released on June 12, found that by March 2021, national vaccination coverage rates were similar to those found in the last survey conducted in 2019. The StatCan report cautions that although it looks like the early disruptions from COVID-19 didn't have much influence on national childhood immunization rates, many children captured in the survey would have already had some or all of their recommended shots before the pandemic began. Mark Comeau, manager of the Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey, said the results give a "partial measure" of the pandemic's impact on routine pediatric vaccinations. He said data from the next survey, which comes out every 2 years, will provide information about vaccination rates later in the pandemic.

International

US: Walmart plans to expand its specialty HIV outreach

Walmart has announced plans to expand its HIV specialty-pharmacy program to more than 80 HIV-specialty facilities across nearly a dozen states by the end of this year, [CNBC reports](#). The pilot program was first launched in late 2021, targeting just over a half a dozen highly affected communities. “We can see from the data that there’s a need here—there’s a higher incidence of HIV,” said Kevin Host, senior vice-president of Walmart pharmacy. The company’s pharmacists have undergone specialized training on HIV conditions and drugs to treat and prevent the virus. A big part of that is how to begin a conversation with patients who might be at risk. “Getting patients to talk about their status can be a challenge,” said pharmacist Gemima Kleine. “There’s the stigma around it, and it’s better than it used to be, but it’s not gone.”

UK: MPs launch new inquiry to examine role of pharmacy services in future of NHS

Last week, a committee of Members of Parliament launched an inquiry to examine the role of pharmacy in the future of the National Health Service (NHS), [Pharmacy Business reports](#). The pharmacy inquiry will explore issues impacting different types of pharmacy, with a particular focus on community, primary care and hospital pharmacy services, and will consider current challenges around funding, workforce and the digital infrastructure. Planned developments within the profession will enable future pharmacists to be independent prescribers from Day 1 of registration, giving them a greater role within primary care teams. “It is clear that pharmacy has a central role to play in the future of the NHS. With a greater focus on personalized and patient-centred health care, we will be asking what more must be done to make sure that the profession is in the best shape to meet demand,” said Steve Brine, the chair of the Health and Social Care Committee.

UK: Pharmacy chain shuts 237 branches across UK

As of June 13, Lloyds Pharmacy has shut down its 237 branches in Sainsbury’s supermarkets, [Birmingham Live reports](#). The decision was announced at the start of the year, according to a Sainsbury’s spokesperson. Nigel Swift, the deputy managing director of Phoenix UK, which owns the

Numark and Rowlands pharmacy groups, said the Lloyds closures must be a wake-up call for the government. “This announcement is the clearest possible sign of the dire situation facing community pharmacy in England as a result of insufficient government funding,” Swift said. “At a time when the NHS is in crisis, the community pharmacy network is needed more than ever before. These closures will put even more pressure on already overstretched nearby pharmacies and dilute patient access to essential healthcare services, particularly in deprived communities.”

In Depth

Can face masks help protect you from wildfire smoke? Health expert explains

As wildfires continue to burn in several provinces, smoky skies across parts of the country are prompting recommendations from health officials to wear face masks to avoid inhaling harmful smoke. Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos told reporters the morning of June 7 that he was feeling the impacts of the smoky air and encouraged people, especially those with pre-existing respiratory conditions, to wear an N95 mask. What’s especially harmful about wildfire smoke are the extremely small particles—called fine particulates—that can travel into the lungs when we breathe, [CTV News explains](#).

Worth Repeating

“The biggest mistake health-care providers make is allowing stereotypes and stigmatism to drive their interactions with Indigenous folks . . . Health-care professionals need to do better by learning about and understanding how their practice might involve anti-Indigenous racism and what steps they can take to change this narrative.” —IPPC board member Kalbie Hokanson [on how pharmacists can provide safe, inclusive health care](#) to Indigenous communities

This weekly update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. While we aim to ensure all information contained in this update is accurate, CPhA does not take responsibility for the content provided by other organizations and sources.

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