

**Subject:** FW: The Weekly: CPhA's Pharmacy News Update for August 17

**From:** Canadian Pharmacists Association <advocacy@pharmacists.ca>

**Sent:** August 17, 2022 5:07 PM

**Subject:** The Weekly: CPhA's Pharmacy News Update for August 17

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)



Canadian  
Pharmacists  
Association    Association des  
pharmaciens  
du Canada

# The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

## August 17, 2022

### CPhA

#### *Meet the CPhA Board of Directors 2022-2023*

CPhA is pleased to present the [2022-2023 Board of Directors](#). Under the leadership of new Chair [Shawn Bugden](#) and Vice Chair [Annette Robinson](#), the CPhA Board is dedicated to guiding the work that CPhA does on your behalf and ensuring that the voices of our members and stakeholders are heard and considered in our decision-making processes.

#### *Keeping you in the know: Resource updates*

*Infant formula:* Our resource page has everything you need to know about the ongoing hypoallergenic infant formula shortage. [Take a look](#) at the latest information for health-care providers.

*Childhood vaccination:* The [Resource Round-up](#) on childhood vaccination has been updated with a few new items, including a checklist for caregivers that can help make the experience easier for the child, parent and immunizer.

*Vaccine authority:* While pharmacy professionals have administered millions of COVID-19 vaccines and deliver millions of flu shots each year, they are authorized to administer a broad range of other vaccines too. Here's what their vaccination authority [looks like](#) across Canada.

***Webinar recording available: Preventing COVID-19 in high-risk patients***

Did you miss our recent webinar on preventing COVID-19 in high-risk patients? [Watch the recording](#) now to learn about pre-exposure monoclonal antibodies as a prevention option for patients with a lower immune response to COVID-19 infections.

---

## Pharmacy on the frontlines

***BC pharmacist makes 'monster spray' to help North Okanagan kids sleep better***

It's guaranteed to keep monsters away with just 1 quick spray, leading to a peaceful sleep for little ones free of any monster-related disturbances. The "monster spray" is available only from Armstrong Pharmacy and Wellness Centre in Armstrong, BC, and only on special request from pharmacist Jason Buerfeind. Monster Spray 100 mg/mL, the bottle reads, with directions that say: "Spray one spray in bedroom at night to scare off monsters." Meg Pearson [told iNFOnews.ca](#) she made her own monster potion to calm her 5-year-old's nerves at bedtime. However, Pearson said, Declan, 5, and James, 4, weren't too impressed with her homemade spray. She then called the pharmacy for some official pharmacy-approved spray. "I thought, 'That's an awesome idea, there's no way I'm passing this one up,'" Buerfeind said. The monster spray is actually distilled water with a little bit of mint or lavender essential oils in it. Pearson said she was incredibly touched by the kind gesture and would highly recommend Buerfeind's monster spray. "He's got that potion mastered to a tee," she said.

---

## Provincial

***Shortage of common antidepressant leaves Greater Victoria pharmacies scrambling***

A commonly prescribed antidepressant is in short supply nationally again and local pharmacies are struggling to secure enough for their patients, [Victoria News reports](#). There has been a lack of Wellbutrin XL—one of the trade names for bupropion, used to treat depressive disorders—since July 8 due to a surge in demand, according to the federal government's drug supply website. Harish Sharma, owner of the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Langford, BC, said he was lucky to get in a supply of this

extended-release version of the drug on August 4. When he checked the supplier's website in the morning, there were 800 bottles and he was able to buy 10 to cover his patients' needs. But when he checked the website again a few hours later, the stock had completely sold out. Sharma's pharmacy is relatively new in the area and he has a smaller client list than some, but he said the pandemic continues to create challenges with managing stock. Managing supply, including ensuring medications in short supply are spread out between patients who need them, or making alternatives available, is a regular part of pharmacy work, Sharma added.

### ***SK pharmacists leading charge on latest COVID-19 boosters***

Fourth COVID-19 shots are now available to people over the age of 18 in Saskatchewan, and pharmacists are at the forefront of the campaign, [according to Regina radio station 980 CJME](#). Michael Fougere, CEO of the Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan, said pharmacists have administered a lot of vaccinations over the course of the pandemic. "We're prepared for this. We know that we'll be the primary agent of delivery for these vaccinations in the fall," he said. Fougere said pharmacists work hard to make sure the public is safe and have been since the outset of the pandemic. Their working model changed to accommodate offering COVID-19 vaccines by walk-in and appointment as part of their daily work. "Pharmacists are very proud of doing it; that's what they do. They help to keep people safe and they're more than happy to help keep on doing that," Fougere said. He added that pharmacists are regularly available to offer vaccinations and are hoping and expecting an uptake in vaccinations for people over the age of 18 come fall, alongside an uptake in flu shots. "We'll work very hard to make sure those vaccines are available," Fougere shared. "We know that the more people that are protected, the safer we all are."

### ***SickKids clarifies patient letter; prescriptions not a requirement for kids' OTC fever and pain meds***

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) said August 16 that a [recent letter](#) sent to parents and caregivers about possible complications getting some children's over-the-counter fever and pain medicine was not intended to imply that prescriptions would be required everywhere for liquid acetaminophen and ibuprofen, [CBC reports](#). The Toronto hospital says the letter was not meant for the general public and was instead "reminding" parents and caregivers of its patients to get a prescription for those drugs—the key ingredients in Tylenol and Advil, respectively—from their SickKids doctor "to help ensure access." Though they're normally available over the counter, because of what the hospital called a nationwide shortage, some pharmacies might only have those drugs in "large quantities that must be dispensed by a pharmacist" for at-home use. Having a prescription makes that process easier. The Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) says, in general, getting a prescription for those medications is a good idea, though not mandatory. OPA vice-president Jen Belcher said a prescription

helps the pharmacist ensure the right dosage is dispensed to the individual child, based on their age and weight.

### ***AQPP: Negotiations at impasse with government***

On the eve of a new vaccination campaign for COVID-19 and influenza, negotiations between pharmacist owners and the government of Quebec are at an impasse, [98.5 FM reports](#) (original article in French). L'Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP) has not been able to reach an agreement with the government, which affects prices for prescription renewals and for clinical services. Fees are paid to owner pharmacists for each prescription renewal and each clinical activity. They are used to pay employees and expenses, among other things. In fact, they make it possible to operate the pharmacies, said Benoit Morin, president of AQPP. Currently, inflation and rising wages are having a major impact operations, despite increased responsibilities. The inflationary context is not easy for negotiations, Morin said. The agreement, which in particular allows for dispensing fees, the monitoring of drug therapy and clinical services carried out by pharmacists, expired on March 31.

### ***COVID-19 vaccine uptake slow at QC pharmacies during summer months***

With an eighth wave of COVID-19 looming as the start of the school year approaches, few Quebecers have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in pharmacies in the past month, [TVA reports](#) (original article in French). Last month, 20 000 doses of vaccines were administered in pharmacies, which is very few, according to Jean Bourcier, executive vice-president of the l'Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP). Bourcier said there has been a seventh wave—a summer wave. At the same time, the fall vaccination campaign is being launched with possibly a new vaccine that would attack the new strains of the Omicron variant. Bourcier said he believes there is a part of the population waiting for the fall. The vaccination campaign starts this week for the seniors in nursing homes and residences, and gradually, during the month of September, will include other segments of the population. As for Paxlovid, pharmacists are the biggest prescribers in the province. According to Bourcier, more than 6000 treatments have been given.

### ***People who need the morning-after pill will be accommodated in NS: Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists***

The Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists says a situation similar to one that happened in Quebec recently when a young woman was denied access to the morning-after pill could arise but there are processes in place to help the patient get what they need, [SaltWire reports](#). The 24-year-old Saguenay, QC, woman, who wishes to remain anonymous, last week said that a pharmacist there refused to dispense an emergency contraceptive known as Plan B or the morning-after pill because it conflicted with the pharmacist's values. Beverley Zwicker, CEO and registrar of the Nova Scotia College

of Pharmacists, said the college's code of ethics allows for "conscientious objection by pharmacy practitioners based on personal, moral, or religious grounds" in keeping with rights laid out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. "Nonetheless, as outlined in the Code of Ethics, pharmacy practitioners have a professional responsibility to discuss this with the pharmacy manager at the earliest opportunity," Zwicker said. "Pharmacy managers are then expected to provide reasonable accommodation of the practitioner's right of conscience and develop an appropriate means to ensure the medicines or services are provided in as timely and convenient a manner as possible to the patient. This means that each pharmacy must have an established plan in place for patients, including referral to another pharmacist or health care professional, should an individual practitioner conscientiously object to providing specific patient care."

---

## National

### *Saliva-based COVID-19 test approved by Health Canada could reduce discomfort of nasal swab*

A saliva-based PCR test from MicroGEM US that yields results in 30 minutes has received Health Canada authorization, [CBC reports](#). "It's just a lot easier, a lot more comfortable than a nasal test," said Cautlyn Godfrey, business development manager at Strato Labs, which offers several different types of COVID-19 tests, including the saliva-based PCR. Most of Strato Labs' clients are actors who need to be tested quite frequently in order to do their jobs. For those with "high sensitivity to nasal swabs," Godfrey said a spit test helps reduce inflammation and discomfort. So far, he said the device has been used to test "a handful of people" repeatedly. He expects about 20% of Strato Labs' business over the next 3 months will come from the saliva PCR test, which currently costs \$145. Dr. Santiago Perez, an infectious diseases physician and assistant professor at Queen's University, said he could see the test being incredibly useful in settings where repeated testing is required—such as hospitals, long-term care centres, schools and daycares. Still, he said he would like "to see the comparison with both antigen and PCR tests and also in relation to the new variant."

---

## International

### *US: J&J to end global sales of talc-based baby powder*

Johnson & Johnson (J&J) will stop selling talc-based baby powder globally in 2023, the drugmaker said on August 11, more than 2 years after it ended US sales of a product that drew thousands of consumer safety lawsuits, [according to Medscape](#). "As

part of a worldwide portfolio assessment, we have made the commercial decision to transition to an all cornstarch-based baby powder portfolio,” the company said, adding that cornstarch-based baby powder is already sold in countries around the world. In 2020, J&J announced that it would stop selling its talc baby powder in the US and Canada because demand had fallen in the wake of what it called “misinformation” about the product’s safety amid a barrage of legal challenges. The company faces about 38 000 lawsuits from consumers and their survivors claiming its talc products caused cancer due to contamination with asbestos, a known carcinogen. J&J denies the allegations, saying decades of scientific testing and regulatory approvals have shown its talc to be safe and asbestos-free.

***US: Walgreens is reportedly offering pharmacists as much as a \$75K signing bonus amid ongoing labour crunch***

Walgreens is offering a hefty signing bonus to lure pharmacists amid an ongoing labour crunch. [According to the Wall Street Journal](#) (subscriber access), the pharmacy chain is offering as much as US\$75,000 as a sign-on bonus in certain markets across the US. The bonus comes with a requirement for the new hire to stay at their job for a certain period of time, typically at least a year. Although more typical Walgreens signing bonuses are around US\$30,000 or US\$50,000, the larger payout highlights Walgreens’ staffing challenges, which began during the pandemic. A Walgreens spokesperson said the bonuses are “one of many steps to address pharmacy staffing in some areas.” Pharmacies across the US have struggled with staffing throughout the pandemic due to a higher-than-normal workload. Pharmacy workers were tasked with COVID-19 testing, and later, COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots, on top of filling prescriptions. Walgreens began cutting pharmacy hours at some locations last year to make up for the pharmacist shortage—roughly 3000 stores are currently operating with reduced hours.

***UK: Vaccine targeting Omicron variant approved ahead of fall vaccine campaign***

The UK became the first country to approve the Moderna vaccine targeting the Omicron variant of COVID-19 as a booster shot, ahead of a planned fall vaccination campaign to shore up immune defenses against the virus, [Reuters reports](#). The so-called bivalent vaccine is directed against both the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and the first Omicron variant, also known as BA.1, which drove large waves of infection over the winter. The approval was based on clinical trial data showing that a booster with the bivalent Moderna vaccine triggered a strong immune response against both omicron BA.1 and the original strain.

***UK: Pharmacists warn shortage of drugs is putting patients at risk***

A shortage of some medicines is putting patients at risk, pharmacists have warned,



according to [Sky News](#). A poll of 1562 UK pharmacists for the *Pharmaceutical Journal* found more than half believed patients had been put at risk in the past 6 months due to drug shortages. A number of patients have been facing difficulties accessing some medicines in recent months, sometimes having to go to multiple pharmacies to find their prescription or needing to go back to their general practitioner to be prescribed an alternative. Since June, the government has issued a number of “medicine supply notifications,” highlighting shortages for drugs including pain relief drugs used in childbirth, mouth ulcer medication, migraine treatment, an antihistamine, a drug used by prostate cancer and endometriosis patients, an antipsychotic drug used among bipolar disorder and schizophrenia patients, a type of inhaler, and a certain brand of insulin. [The Pharmaceutical Journal also reported](#) that ministers urged hospitals on August 3 to “conserve stock” of an anti-clotting drug used to treat strokes.

### ***UK: RPS Scotland launches online pharmacy best practice hub***

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) Scotland has [launched an online pharmacy best practice hub](#) to showcase the best practices adopted by Scottish pharmacy teams. The brand new pharmacy best practice hub, hosted on the RPS Scotland website, went live on August 11. “Pharmacy teams across Scotland are undertaking fantastic work right now, in a variety of settings including community, hospital and general practice pharmacy as well as specialist settings,” RPS Scotland said in a statement. “Many of these examples demonstrate the very best in pharmacy practice, which is supporting the profession to move further towards RPS Scotland’s professional vision for the future of pharmacy, Pharmacy 2030.”

---

## **In Depth**

### ***Everything you need to know about polio as Canada plans to start testing wastewater***

As countries respond to a growing number of polio cases, the *National Post* [gives a primer](#) on everything you need to know about the disease and how to protect yourself.

---

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.

Canadian Pharmacists Association

851 Industrial Avenue, Mailbox M035 Ottawa,  
ON K1G 4L3

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#)

