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Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

Earn up to 4 CEUs at the Canadian Pharmacy Heart Failure Symposium

Registration is still open for the [Canadian Pharmacy Heart Failure Symposium!](#) Coming to you virtually on February 4, 2023, the first-ever Canadian heart failure conference aimed specifically at pharmacy professionals in all practice settings will provide you and your team with an overview and update on the latest information and evidence you need to support your patients living with heart failure. You can earn up to 4 CEUs as you learn about heart failure diagnosis and assessment, the role of the pharmacist, guideline updates, patient perspectives, and more. [Register now and check out](#) the full lineup of sessions.

Save the date: National Kids and Vaccines Day town hall event

To celebrate [National Kids and Vaccines Day](#) on February 23, Children's Healthcare Canada and the Canadian Association of Science Centres' ScienceUpFirst initiative are hosting a free [national town hall](#) event where health-care leaders and experts will answer questions about the importance and safety of routine vaccinations, as well as influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, as we continue to face a surge in infection caused by both. The

[panel of experts](#) includes CPhA's Chief Pharmacist Officer, Dr. Danielle Paes. The town hall event will take place on February 23 at 8 pm ET via Zoom.

Use CPS Full Access to assess and prescribe for minor ailments

Did you know that [CPS Full Access](#) has the information and resources you need to help treat your patients with minor ailments? CPS Full Access provides treatment algorithms, non-pharmacologic and pharmacologic therapy options, patient information handouts, and more! Purchase or upgrade your subscription today.

Pharmacy on the front lines

'We've always wanted to do this': Brampton pharmacist says new powers to treat help alleviate medical system pressures

The building at 55 Dusk Drive in Brampton, Ontario, is a unique place. In between a dentist office and physiotherapy clinic, there's a pharmacy beside a walk-in clinic, with an open-concept floor plan connecting the waiting room, the doctor's office front desk, and the drugstore counter. It makes for a seamless experience for patients, and now, thanks to a change in policy for pharmacists that allows them to assess and prescribe for 13 different minor ailments, the experience could become even smoother. "The main driver for this is really increasing access," Gurpreet Lall, pharmacist and manager at Dusk Pharmacy, [told the Brampton Guardian](#). "We've always wanted to do this." Lall added that this will help reduce the strain not only on doctors' offices and walk-in clinics, but hospitals as well. "If you're a [parent] on a Saturday afternoon and your child has an eye infection, what are you going to do?" he said, explaining that pharmacies are open later in the evenings and on weekends, providing a critical access point for more immediate treatment of minor conditions.

Provincial

PEI pharmacists can now prescribe COVID-19 paxlovid treatment

Prince Edward Island residents will now have easier access to an oral antiviral medication used to treat mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults at higher risk of severe illness, [CTV News reports](#). Community pharmacists across the island can now prescribe paxlovid—which has been available in PEI since January 2022—to eligible adults. Health officials say the medication should be started as early as possible, within the first 5 days of COVID-19 symptoms. “Having more convenient access to Paxlovid prescription and treatment through participating community pharmacies is another important step forward in our efforts to protect Islanders from COVID-19; however, it is not a substitute for vaccination,” PEI’s Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Heather Morrison, said in a news release on January 12. The PEI government said the new initiative is part of an effort to alleviate the pressure on the province’s health-care system and improve access to timely health care for Islanders. “It has perhaps never been more essential that health-care professionals employ their full scope of practice to support timely access to care,” said Erin MacKenzie, the executive director of the PEI Pharmacists Association. “As medication experts, pharmacists can assess individuals to ensure that Paxlovid treatment is right for them and prescribe it if appropriate.”

Quebec pharmacies may stop distributing free COVID-19 rapid tests

At the Proxim pharmacy in Montreal’s Hochelaga-Maisonneuve neighbourhood, there are dozens of COVID-19 rapid tests on hand. Long gone are the days when clients lined up outside in hopes of getting their hands on a box, but the pharmacy says it still hands out about 2 to 4 boxes a day. “It’s slowing down, but it’s stable for at least 3 months,” Benoit Morin, the president of Quebec’s Pharmacist-Owners Association and owner of the Proxim on Sherbrooke Street, [told Global News](#). In December 2021, the Quebec government announced that COVID-19 rapid tests would be made available to the general population through select pharmacies. People would have access to 5 free tests every 30 days. But, in an email to Global News Monday, a spokesperson for Quebec’s health and social services ministry said the agreement for the distribution of rapid tests by pharmacists expires on March 31. Last year, Quebec pharmacies handed out about 8 million boxes, according to Morin. That’s 40 million tests. “Discussions are ongoing as to where we go from here. If changes are made to the distribution of rapid tests in Quebec, the information will be provided in due time,” Morin added. “We’ll see what the public health will [decide], but we will need the tests to prescribe Paxlovid and things like that.”

Expanded pharmacy services touted as a way to alleviate NS health-care pressures

Nova Scotia could alleviate some of the strain on an overstressed provincial health-care system by funding more pharmacy services, according to Allison Bodnar, CEO of the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia. “We have opportunities to fund pharmacy in a different way to help alleviate but it’s more about funding than it is about scope . . . Nova Scotia has one of the broadest scopes of practice in the country,” Bodnar [told SaltWire](#). “The difference and the distinction that we need to be clear on is what is in a pharmacist’s scope of practice in Nova Scotia versus what is a funded service.” Nova Scotia pharmacists have worked with an expanded scope of practice since 2011, but Bodnar said the provincial funding has not caught up with the services that can be provided. Currently, patients have to pay out-of-pocket to access treatment for 31 minor ailments from pharmacists. Liberal Leader Zach Churchill said it’s time for the Nova Scotia government to follow suit with the other provinces that have recently moved to publicly fund these types of pharmacist services.

Pharmacy chains welcome minor ailments prescribing in Ontario

Ontario pharmacists rung in the new year with a new role assessing and prescribing medications for more than a dozen minor ailments, such as cold sores, pink eye, hemorrhoids and urinary tract infections. The changes have been welcomed by Rexall and McKesson Canada’s independent pharmacy network, which includes Guardian, IDA, Remedy’sRx and the Medicine Shoppe, as an opportunity for pharmacists to increase patients’ access to quality care and take pressure off the health-care system in other areas. “We know that pharmacists are critical to the delivery of accessible, integrated health care in the province, and we look forward to serving the community in new and significant ways,” Mona Sabharwal, the senior vice-president of pharmacy services at Rexall, said [in a news release](#). In [McKesson Canada’s news release](#), Smita Patil, the vice-president of retail member relations and professional affairs, added that pharmacists across its network will “help patients get the care they need sooner and closer to home.”

New alcohol guidelines advise fewer drinks

Canadians should consider limiting their alcohol consumption to 2 drinks or less per week, according [to new national guidance](#). The recommendations released on January 17 by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) said that drinking more than 2 standard drinks—an equivalent of 13.45 g of pure alcohol—at a time is associated with increased risks, [Global News reports](#). The CCSA report is an update to Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines that were published in 2011, which considered up to 2 drinks a day or 10 a week for women and 3 drinks a day or 15 a week for men as "low risk." The update comes after 2 years of research, a review of nearly 6000 peer-reviewed studies and about 1000 survey submissions from the public. The updated guidance aims to provide an "evidence base for future alcohol policy and prevention resources, with a view to changing Canada's drinking culture and curbing the normalization of harmful alcohol use in society," CCSA said in its report.

International

US: Walgreens removes purchase limits on children's fever medicines

Pharmacy chain Walgreens Boots Alliance said on January 16 that it has removed online-only purchase limits for its over-the-counter pediatric fever-reducing products, as supply conditions improve, [according to Reuters](#). Last month, pharmacy chains, including Walgreens, CVS Health Corp and US grocer Kroger limited purchases of children's pain and cold medicines at a time when the country was experiencing one of the worst flu seasons in a decade. Walgreens had put a limit of 6 over-the-counter pediatric fever reducer products per online transaction.

UK: 73% of pharmacy workforce considering quitting, RPS survey finds

Three-quarters of the UK's pharmacy workforce have considered leaving their role or the profession entirely, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) revealed in its fourth annual [workforce well-being survey](#) published on January 12. This marks an increase from 2021 results, which revealed that 33% had considered leaving their role, and the same percentage had considered leaving

the profession altogether, [Chemist+Druggist reports](#). The survey also revealed that 88% of respondents were at high risk of burnout, with 96% of community pharmacists at a higher risk than pharmacists working in other sectors. The findings demonstrate continued pressure on pharmacists across the workforce, especially in community pharmacy, and highlight the need for workforce planning to help manage pharmacy staffing and workloads, RPS said [in a news release](#). “With pharmacy teams at risk of burnout, governments urgently need to improve workforce planning for pharmacy that addresses head-on the issues of skill mix and adequate staffing which are at the heart of overload in pharmacy,” RPS President Claire Anderson said.

Australia: Pharmacy Guild backs RACGP vaping guidelines

Regulations relating to nicotine vaping products (NVPs) need to be tightened to reduce black-market sales and adolescent use, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia said in a consultation submission to the Therapeutic Goods Administration. The guild said in its submission that it supports the view of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) that NVPs “are not first-line treatments for smoking cessation,” [the Australian Journal of Pharmacy reports](#) (subscriber access only). The group also backed the RACGP’s NVP dosing guidelines, which recommend “using nicotine freebase of concentration 6-12 mg/mL as a reasonable starting strength for less dependent smokers,” with higher concentrations of up to 20 mg/mL for more heavy smokers. The guild also supports the prohibition of colouring agents and other “unnecessary ingredients” to reduce the appeal of vapes to the younger population, adding that it recommends limits to flavouring chemicals even in non-nicotine vapes, which are mostly used by adolescents.

In Depth

Street drugs in Canada are becoming more toxic—and tools to treat them less effective. Why?

A rise in the circulation of highly potent fentanyl that is increasingly being mixed with other drugs is making Canada’s street drug supply so toxic and unpredictable, tools to prevent overdoses such as naloxone are not always fully effective, experts say. The situation has become so volatile, front-line doctors and workers say they are left to guess at what mixture of substances a

person in crisis may have been exposed to, which is why they say Canada needs to move faster on measures like safe supply and drug regulation to stop the sharp rise in opioid-related deaths in Canada. [Global News explains](#).

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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