



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

Decreasing flu shot demand could point to difficult flu season ahead: CPhA

CPhA is [raising concerns](#) about the falling demand for flu shots ahead of what could be a challenging flu season. According to a new [national survey](#) conducted by Abacus Data, only 50% of Canadians say they will get the flu shot this year, down 6 points from a survey conducted in 2021. “We’re actually quite concerned about those findings,” Dr. Danielle Paes, CPhA’s CPO, [told Global News](#). “The unseasonal spike in respiratory illnesses this summer combined with the influenza rates we’ve seen in the southern hemisphere could signal a difficult flu season ahead.” Emerging data from the southern hemisphere suggests Canada will also see a more severe flu season with a return to pre-pandemic influenza levels. After 2 years with record low flu activity, largely attributed to the public health measures put in place to curb the spread of COVID-19, we need to prepare for a more typical flu season—which is especially concerning as our health system struggles with significant staff shortages and capacity issues. Pharmacists are gearing up for another busy fall, with a growing number of Canadians planning to visit their pharmacy for their flu shot. The survey suggests 62% of those planning on getting a flu shot will get it at a pharmacy, up 6 points since last year. Pharmacies should start receiving their flu shot supply throughout October.

Provincial

Expanded scope of practice in the works for NL pharmacists

Newfound and Labrador pharmacists are expecting an announcement on their scope of practice soon, after the province's Health Minister Tom Osborne said this week that an update would come "in short order," [Canadian Healthcare Network reports](#) (subscription required). There is "no health group (or) discipline that is not being looked at in terms of what the scope of practice should be," he said, in response to concerns that pharmacists were being overlooked while nurses' scope of practice was expanded. "It seems that we've gotten a bit more of a commitment from government to allow residents of the province to be able to access pharmacists for some health care, which will help to take a big strain off emergency rooms and walk in clinics," said Janice Audeau, president of the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. "There's a lot we can do to take some of the burden off those folks, so we're feeling pretty optimistic right now." Audeau added that she's hopeful the government will cover the fees involved with services such as prescription extensions, as well as changing legislation to allow pharmacists to prescribe for minor ailments, like uncomplicated urinary tract infections, and order labs that go along with certain prescription medications. Pharmacists in the province have been pushing for an expanded scope of practice for years, she said, but "given the current state of our health care system, they're really looking at things a little bit more seriously now, because we really need to take some stress off of the folks in [emergency] and in 811 and really take care of our residents."

'Help Us Help You' campaign helps pharmacies in Nova Scotia talk to the public about their services

The Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia (PANS) has launched a campaign advertising to the public that pharmacies are "more than dispensaries" and are an accessible option for many health care services, [Canadian Healthcare Network reports](#) (subscription required). The "[Help Us Help You](#)" campaign was created in response to feedback from pharmacists saying they needed help from the association on educating patients about what services pharmacies offer, how they do it, and why it might take longer than expected to

get service. For instance, pharmacists in Nova Scotia can provide prescription renewals, offer birth control management, can assess and prescribe for urinary tract infections and shingles, and offer preventative treatment for Lyme disease. But Nova Scotians might not realize pharmacists can do all of these things, Allison Bodnar, the CEO of PANS, told CityNews. “Most of these services have been within our scope of practice for a long time, but it’s only within the last few years that many of these have been funded as part of our Nova Scotia health system.” Campaign materials, including buttons, stickers and posters, are being distributed to more than 300 pharmacies across Nova Scotia.

Booster battle: NS pharmacists urge patients to research before booking

With COVID-19 booster programs ramping up again this fall, health officials have an important message: not all boosters are created equal, at the moment. Right now, Moderna’s bivalent vaccine is the only approved shot that offers some protection against the Omicron variant, but few people seem to know that, [CTV reports](#). The [latest guidance](#) from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends adults 18 years of age and older receive a fall booster dose of “a bivalent Omicron-containing mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.” Still, whether because of habit or name preference, many people have been booking Pfizer-BioNTech shots. “I can see that a lot of people have booked for a Pfizer appointment. And we did some preliminary reach out to some folks, and it’s clear that many of these individuals think they’re booking a Pfizer bivalent, when in fact, they have booked the Pfizer ancestral vaccine,” said Allison Bodnar, CEO of the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia, adding that the Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent vaccine is not approved in Canada at this time. “We just want to let everyone know that, if you are trying to get a bivalent vaccine this week or next, you should be booking a Moderna appointment.”

Deal with SDM will bring free menstrual products to Manitoba schools and shelters

Manitoba is making pads and tampons free inside schools, women’s shelters and resource centres, thanks to a deal struck between the province and Shoppers Drug Mart (SDM) last week. The deal will see SDM provide 3.3 million pads and tampons per year to the province over 3 years, [according to CTV](#). Minister of Families Rochelle Squires said she wants the program to continue for longer than that. “What that looks like after 3 years I don’t know,

but we are certainly going to work with other partners, with other levels of government and with community to ensure that we achieve menstrual equity in the province of Manitoba,” she said. Alana Livesey, a senior advisor with Plan International Canada, said removing the economic barrier is a good first step, pointing to a recent survey that found many people experience “period poverty.” In fact, “1 in 5 women and girls who menstruate cannot afford menstrual products and 1 in 5 respondents said that they ration or used their products longer than they should because they can’t afford it,” Livesey said.

National

Decolonizing and Indigenizing evidence-based medicine: Learning opportunity ahead of NDTR

Ahead of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) on September 30, pharmacist Jaris Swidrovich is offering a free virtual session on decolonizing and Indigenizing evidence-based medicine. The session will apply a decolonial and Indigenous lens to evidence-based medicine, critically evaluating the knowledge systems that inform it, and explore intercultural counselling strategies that honour Indigenous medicines and practices. Swidrovich is a Saulteaux First Nations person from Yellow Quill First Nation, a pharmacy professor at the University of Toronto, and co-chair of the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada. The session, presented through the Centre for Practice Excellence at the University of Toronto’s Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, will take place on September 29 at 4:00 pm ET. [Register here.](#)

Canada preparing to drop COVID-19 vaccine mandate at border: government sources

The Canadian government is preparing to drop the COVID-19 vaccine mandate at the border by the end of September, multiple government sources have [told Global News](#). Use of the controversial ArriveCAN app to provide vaccination information to border officials would become optional once the restrictions are lifted. However, the source said the plan still needs to be finalized by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau before it can be officially announced. A spokesperson for Transport Canada referred questions about the decision to the Public Health Agency of Canada, which told Global News

on September 20 that “there have been no decisions made” in regard to the existing health order. Under the current rules, foreign nationals are typically not allowed to travel to Canada unless they have completed a primary series of an approved COVID-19 vaccine, unless they qualify for an exception. The current border measures are set to expire on September 30 after being extended in late June.

International

Canadian pharmacy leader named new president of FIP’s Community Pharmacy Section

Ahead of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Congress this week in Seville, Spain, Canadian pharmacy leader Sherif Guorgui was [named](#) the new president of FIP’s Community Pharmacy Section. He will serve as president for a 4-year term, responsible for FIP activities that aim to support and advance community pharmacy and pharmacy practice across the globe. Guorgui is co-CEO and chief of strategy with the OnPharm-United, which represents more than 600 independent pharmacies in Ontario, British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

US: Some pharmacies reporting a shortage of Moderna COVID-19 boosters

Some pharmacies are reporting shortages of Moderna’s new bivalent COVID-19 booster shot, as one factory used in producing the vaccine remains offline following a safety inspection, [Bloomberg reports](#). The US government supply of Moderna’s shot is currently limited, causing appointments for the product to vary across the country, a Walgreens Boots Alliance pharmacy spokesperson said in an emailed statement. Meanwhile, CVS Health said some of its drug stores have used all of the updated shots they received from the government, and the company is trying to get more doses. A Moderna spokesperson told Bloomberg the company is working closely with the US government to deliver “significant amounts” of updated boosters amid “high demand in certain areas of the country.” Moderna expects the supply constraints to be resolved in the coming days and says it’s still on pace to deliver 70 million doses of its booster by the end of the year. Pharmacies aren’t seeing any supply issues with Pfizer-BioNTech’s updated COVID-19 vaccine.

US: Congress needs to preserve seniors' access to pharmacist care

In a co-authored [piece for STAT](#), Ilisa Bernstein, interim CEO of the American Pharmacists Association, and Paul Abramowitz, CEO of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, stress the need for Congress to pass legislation requiring Medicare to cover pharmacist services for America's seniors now and during future public health emergencies. The article outlines the central role pharmacists have played throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, providing access to testing, vaccination and treatment, especially for older and socioeconomically vulnerable Americans who may have otherwise been left behind in the nation's response. In response to the pandemic, the federal government used its emergency authority under the *Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act*, to allow pharmacists to order and administer vaccinations for flu, COVID-19 and other infectious diseases nationwide. It used the same authority to allow pharmacists to prescribe COVID-19 tests and antivirals in every state and established a program to pay pharmacists for prescribing COVID-19 testing, certain treatment services and administering vaccines to the uninsured. Medicare, however, does not cover pharmacists' services related to testing and treatment of COVID-19, flu, strep and other infectious diseases.

US: Many Alaska pharmacies are understaffed, leading to sporadic hours and patients turned away

Signs of a worsening pharmacist shortage in Alaska are everywhere. Reduced hours at Anchorage pharmacies. Significant signing bonuses and multiple job offers for newly graduated pharmacy students. Patients being told to come back the next day to pick up prescriptions due to short staffing. It's an issue that has been brewing for years but crystallized during the pandemic in Alaska, and nationwide, [Anchorage Daily News reports](#). Experts in Alaska say the reasons for the understaffing are complex and varied. One big reason is that during the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacies became a primary location for vaccinations. It's a task they were set up for, but not at the volume that they were being asked to take on, according to Tom Wadsworth, the dean of the University of Alaska Anchorage's pharmacy program. "Instead of just a couple hundred people who would trickle in for a flu shot, they had to vaccinate the whole freaking state," he said. That rise in demand—and the stress and hostility that many faced as vaccinations became a political flashpoint—pushed many to retire early or quit at the same time that the need for more employees

was increasing. This has been true nationwide, said Coleman Cutchins, a pharmacist with the Alaska Department of Health. “But it’s hitting us a little harder because we didn’t have as big of a workforce. And we can’t share resources with other states.”

‘Pharmacy united in action for a healthier world’: World Pharmacists Day 2022

This year’s theme of World Pharmacists Day on September 25 aims to showcase pharmacy’s positive impact on health around the world and further strengthen solidarity within the profession. The International Pharmaceutical Federation invites colleagues from all sectors of the pharmacy profession to take part in the campaign and show the world how pharmacists are united for health, regardless of and overcoming conflict, different politics and cultures, and economic disparity. “The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 3 sets out a number of health targets including for non-communicable diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and mental health) and communicable diseases (for example, HIV, tuberculosis and neglected tropical diseases). We have seen improvements in many of these areas and our profession should be proud of and make known its contributions. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered progress and it is imperative that we rally to build back better,” Dominique Jordan, president of FIP, said. [Check out](#) the campaign resources to help you celebrate.

In Depth

Inside the Queen’s pharmacy: From flu jabs to the coronation anointing oil

Few pharmacies have a backstory quite as majestic as John Bell & Croyden. The central London pharmacy—which first opened its doors in the late eighteenth century—may not be a high street name, but it is a go-to for some of the world’s wealthiest. Appointed in 1958, John Bell & Croyden held the title as official pharmacy of the late Queen Elizabeth II. Chemist+Druggist [takes a look](#) at just what makes it one of the grandest pharmacies in the world.

Worth Repeating

“We are urging Canadians to get their flu shot once it’s available this season. It’s the best way to help protect yourself and those around you from getting the flu. We need to do all we can to limit the spread of influenza within our communities and ensure that our already-struggling health system is not overwhelmed by a sharp rise of flu cases this fall.” —Dr. Danielle Paes, CPhA’s CPO, [on the need to get the flu shot](#) this year

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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