



# The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

**January 26, 2022**

## **CPhA**

### ***CPhA launches Pharmacy Workforce Wellness initiative to support mental health and sustainability of profession***

CPhA has launched the [Pharmacy Workforce Wellness initiative](#) to address the core causes driving stress and burnout in the profession, and to identify solutions and strategies aimed at minimizing the impact of the pandemic and its effect on the pharmacy workforce. Pharmacists and their teams are struggling with fears of exposure to COVID-19, staff shortages and increasing workloads. This is in addition to the many challenges the pandemic has already placed on standard pharmacy operations and routine patient care. "There is a critical need to support our pharmacy community," said Dr. Danielle Paes, chief pharmacist officer at CPhA. "We have asked a lot of pharmacy professionals over the past two years. Their unwavering commitment to carry us through this pandemic and meet the increased public demand for their services has put their own wellness at risk." As a first step in the Pharmacy Workforce Wellness initiative, CPhA has developed the [Canadian Pharmacy Mental Health and Workforce Wellness Survey](#) to understand and highlight the profession's state of mental health and the pressures being felt by pharmacists and pharmacy teams during this challenging time. "We are asking Canadian pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to take part in this important survey so we can communicate the realities of frontline experiences to government, key stakeholders and the public and advocate for more pharmacy supports," Paes added.

***Webinar Jan. 27: SOS Code Orange! Ensuring business continuity during COVID-19***

Every phase of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges for pharmacy professionals and operators. Amidst the latest Omicron wave, it has become even more difficult to juggle personal and family needs with work demands, staffing shortages and business interruptions due to COVID-19. Join us tomorrow from 3:00-4:00pm ET for a panel discussion that will highlight the impact of COVID-19 on pharmacy and on patient care, and will explore creative approaches to maintaining pharmacy operations. [Register now.](#)

### ***Webinar Feb. 9: From zero to hero: Creative strategies for conflict resolution***

In today's busy pharmacy environment, conflict is unavoidable and can be a significant stressor for pharmacy teams. Join us on Feb. 9 from 1:00-2:00pm ET for an engaging discussion with our expert panellists, Afsana Gibson-Chowdry, Karen Agro and Kyro Maseh, who will share practical tips and skills that can be used in real life situations in your pharmacy, from de-escalating confrontations with patients, to dealing with difficult discussions with colleagues and prescribers, and more. [Register now.](#)

### ***Self-care isn't selfish***

A reminder for pharmacists on Bell Let's Talk Day: You do so much for your patients and communities. We know you're tired, struggling and burnt out. While taking a moment for yourself won't change everything, it may help. [Here are some practical ideas and tips](#) and a [special message](#) from CPhA's Chief Pharmacist Officer, Dr. Danielle Paes.

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## **Pharmacists on the front line**

### ***NS pharmacy tackles waste with reusable glass vials***

When Alicia and Miranda Teasdale decided to move home from Alberta to Antigonish, NS, they had one big priority: open a pharmacy that would make their community think differently about waste. The sisters just launched the Teasdale Apothecary, which offers reusable glass vials for prescriptions, [reports CBC](#). While the reusable vials are being used [in some pharmacies in other parts of Canada](#), the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia believes the Teasdale Apothecary is the first to try the system in Nova Scotia. Pharmacist Miranda Teasdale said she can't believe the amount of waste pharmacies produce. "Unfortunately, we are a huge contributor to plastic waste in the environment," she said. "Even though [plastic vials] are plastic and they say they're recyclable, a lot of the time they aren't recycled." Patients at the pharmacy now have an option. They can use plastic vials from an environmentally friendly Canadian company or opt into the bottle program. They pay a deposit of \$2 or \$3 depending on the size of the jar.

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## **Provincial**

### ***More rapid tests coming to Quebec pharmacies this week***

Millions of rapid tests will be delivered to Quebec pharmacies this week, [says Global News](#). Waiting lists are getting shorter, and 3 million additional free tests will be available in pharmacies

this week. “Things are getting better and hopefully this week or next week, we’ll be able to meet the demand,” said Benoit Morin of the Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires. Pharmacists have no specifics on how many rapid tests they’ll receive in February, but Morin is optimistic. “There is no confirmation, but there is some indication that we will receive some more in February,” he said.

### ***New Brunswick pharmacists see strong turnout again for flu shots this season***

New Brunswickers are continuing to turn out for flu shots in high numbers, following a year that saw a boost in numbers amid the COVID-19 pandemic, [according to CBC](#). Pharmacists have administered 135,467 flu vaccines this season while continuing to offer COVID-19 shots and rollout boosters. Andrew Drover, president of the New Brunswick Pharmacists’ Association and owner of Harrisville Pharmacy in Moncton, said demand appears to be on pace to match last year. “People started getting the flu shot who might not have gotten it before,” he said. “This year was a little bit different in that it became part of people’s routine.” Pharmacists have been adapting to integrate both COVID-19 boosters and flu shots into their clinics, substantially increasing the number of vaccines they put into arms. They’ve administered more than 735,000 COVID vaccines since March 2021.

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## **National**

### ***COVID-19 blamed for greatest drop in life expectancy in Canada since 1921***

Statistics Canada says the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to an average 7-month decline in national life expectancy, the largest decrease recorded since 1921 when the vital statistics registration system was introduced, [says the Canadian Press](#). The federal agency released preliminary data on Jan. 24 showing national life expectancy, which is estimated on an annual basis, was 81.7 years for those born in 2020 — down from 82.3 the year before. There were 307,205 deaths in Canada in 2020, representing a 7.7% increase from 2019. Of those, 16,151 deaths were attributed to COVID-19 during the first year of the pandemic, representing 5.3% of the country’s 2020 deaths. That made COVID-19 the third leading cause of death in Canada in 2020, though Statistics Canada added that the pandemic may have also contributed indirectly to a number of other deaths across the country.

### ***Survey: Canadians’ mental health deteriorating as pandemic drags on***

More Canadians are struggling with their mental health as the COVID-19 pandemic hits the 2-year mark, according to a [new survey](#). The Angus Reid Institute polled more than 1500 Canadians to probe their mental and emotional state of mind. Released Jan. 24, the results found that nearly half of Canadians said they’ve been feeling fatigued, 40% reported feelings of frustration, 37% said they’ve been anxious and 36% said they are struggling with their mental health, a jump from 25% in November before the Omicron variant triggered a new wave of infections, hospitalizations and restrictions. “Nearing the second anniversary of Canada’s first pandemic shutdown, mental health struggles among Canadians are rising,” stated the report on the findings.

## ***NACI updates recommendations on use of COVID-19 vaccines in children 5-11***

On Jan. 25, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) released updated recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in children. The new guidance strengthens their existing recommendations for children 5-11, noting that a complete series with the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine (10 mcg) **should** be offered to children 5-11 years of age who do not have contraindications to the vaccine, with a dosing interval of at least 8 weeks between the first and second doses. Additional updated recommendations are available online in the [full NACI Statement](#) and [Summary of the NACI Statement](#).

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## **International**

### ***US: Pharmacies rolling out free N95 masks***

The first free N95 masks for the public have started to arrive at US pharmacies, with more on the way, [says CNN](#). The Biden administration is seeking to ramp up access to high-quality masks amid the spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant. “Last week masks began shipping and arriving at pharmacies and grocers around (the) country. We expect that throughout the week the number of stores and N95s arriving to scale up significantly,” an administration official told CNN. The Biden administration announced last week that the [400 million N95 masks](#), which are coming from the Strategic National Stockpile, will be distributed to pharmacies and community health centres, with the program expected to be fully up and running by early February. CVS pharmacies are expected to receive and begin distributing free N95 masks in the coming weeks as supply from the federal government comes in, and Walgreens expects them to be available at some locations starting this Friday. “We are pleased to partner with the Administration to make N95 masks in varying sizes available free of charge at participating Walgreens locations while supplies last,” a Walgreens spokesperson wrote in an email to CNN.

### ***US: Pharmacists well-positioned for larger role in patient care amid growing provider shortage***

With provider shortages intensifying, new survey data reveals that pharmacists are highly trusted and well-positioned to take a larger role in direct patient care, [says Health Executive](#). The US has one of the highest hospitalization rates for conditions requiring ambulatory services, yet the physician shortage is projected to rise to between 54,000 and 139,000 by 2033. Patients, providers and pharmacists agree that the latter is primed to help with this growing workforce shortage, Columbia Mailman School of Public Health and Express Scripts Pharmacy experts underscored in their [Prescription of Trust report](#). Nearly 80% of pharmacists surveyed believe they will take on a bigger role in preventative care and further integrate with health-care teams by 2030. As of now, more than 77% of patients view pharmacists as integral to their health, with the majority having no problem with them checking vitals, diagnosing acute conditions and prescribing medications for such ailments. On the provider side, including physicians and nurse practitioners, 63% believe pharmacists will be more involved in preventative care by 2030, and 44% even forecast pharmacists working in primary care practices for more direct collaboration.

### ***UK: Free NHS weight loss plan initiative expanded to pharmacy***

Individuals who match specific criteria will now be able to access a comprehensive 12-week initiative through a pharmacy that aims to help people lose weight through a plan of diet and exercise, [reports Birmingham Live](#). Having previously been available only through GP consultation, the initiative will become more accessible and ease strain on the National Health Service (NHS). More than 50,000 referrals have already been made to the program, which has been largely viewed as a success, in an effort to develop a healthier population. UK-wide NHS costs attributable to individuals who are overweight or have obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, according to official government statistics. Meanwhile, diabetes, often a by-product of being overweight, already costs the NHS £1.5 million per hour.

### ***Australia: Pharmacies face shortage of COVID rapid tests***

The Australian Labour Party went on the attack about the lack of supply of rapid antigen tests (RATs) on the day the COVID-19 Rapid Test Concessional Access (CRTCA) program went live. Mark Butler, federal shadow minister for health and ageing, told reporters on Jan. 24 that “There is complete chaos across Australia as millions of pensioners and thousands of pharmacists discover they’ve been left completely high and dry.” Anthony Tassone, Victorian branch president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, said that demand for RATs continues to be high. “Every day for weeks, pharmacies are inundated with queries on the availability of rapid antigen test kits by patients and members of the public. Most pharmacies that I have spoken with are not expecting to receive stock until the very end of January or early February,” he said. In media interviews, the guild has asked the public to be patient with their local pharmacy as they are doing everything they can to obtain stock to meet the demands and requests of their patients and community. Tassone [told the AJP](#) that the guild had advised the federal government of the likely stock situation and availability of RATs through pharmacies, recommending a later start date of the CRTCA program so that a greater number of pharmacies would likely have stock to be able to offer eligible patients.

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## **Worth Repeating**

“‘I’m done with COVID’ is the equivalent of offering ‘thoughts and prayers’ after a mass shooting. It’s a bromide, not a remedy...an easy applause line” — *Globe and Mail* health columnist [André Picard says](#) being done with COVID-19 is easier said than done.

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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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