

Subject:

The Weekly: CPhA's Pharmacy News Update for April 27

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Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

April 27, 2022

CPhA

CPhA National Town Hall: The state of mental health and workforce wellness for pharmacy professionals

Earlier this year, we asked you to share your experiences and thoughts with us on burnout, mental health and workforce challenges. From coast to coast, 1400 pharmacy professionals answered the call, and we want to share the results—and discuss next steps—with you. Please join us on Tuesday, May 3, from 2:00-3:30 pm ET as we kick off Mental Health Week with our first CPhA National Town Hall—Pharmacy at a crossroads: The state of mental health and workforce wellness for pharmacy professionals. This interactive discussion will begin with a presentation from Abacus Data's David Coletto that reviews what you told us. CPhA's Chief Pharmacist Officer, Danielle Paes, will then be joined by pharmacists Kelly Grindrod and Paraag Trivedi to discuss what the data reveals about our workforce, the key areas we should be focusing on, and how we can use these insights to inform the next steps in our Pharmacy Workforce Wellness initiative. Your collaboration is key to identifying possible solutions and carving a positive path forward for our profession. We'll be seeking your input and feedback throughout the session. [Register now](#).

Have your say: Use of digital health technology in community pharmacy

CPhA and Canada Health Infoway are inviting pharmacy professionals across Canada to take part in a survey on the use of digital health technology in community pharmacy. The survey aims to track progress and provide a greater understanding of access to, use and impact of digital

health technology, such as e-prescribing and provincial drug information systems, on community pharmacy practice. The [survey](#) should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and can be taken in English or French.

Early bird rates for the Canadian Pharmacy Conference: Pharmacy Rising expire April 29

The Canadian Pharmacy Conference: Pharmacy Rising is coming to Ottawa this June! Space is limited this year and already over 50% sold out, so you'll want to register by April 29 to save with our early bird rates and guarantee your admission. [Register now and check out](#) our lineup of keynote speakers and sessions.

CPS social media contest: Share a photo of you and your copy of the Big Blue Book

CPS: Drug Information, the most trustworthy drug information publication in Canada, which has been in print for more than 60 years, is going digital only and will publish its last print edition this year. In celebration of this milestone in *CPS* history, we're running a social media contest for the chance to win a tablet. To enter, take a photo of you and your copy of the Big Blue Book, post it on social media with #CPSPrint2022, and be sure you're following CPhA. The contest closes on May 6. Order your collector's print edition of *CPS* 2022 [here](#).

Pharmacists on the front line

Alberta lags far behind other provinces in booster uptake

Alberta's COVID-19 booster uptake is trailing the rest of the country, and immunity is waning for many with just 1 or 2 doses of a vaccine, [CTV reports](#). Only 37% of Albertans have rolled up their sleeves for a third shot—something experts believe could be problematic as another wave hits the country. Workers at Sage Plus Pharmacy in Calgary say the disinterest has been noticeable. "In January and February, we were fully booked every day, doing maybe 2 to 300 [boosters] a week," owner Joyce Choi said. "Now, we're maybe doing 10 to 20 a week." And the doses don't have unlimited shelf life, she added. "Throughout the week we're wasting maybe 50% or so," Choi said. Health Canada says nearly 1.5 million vaccines have gone bad across the country this year, and tens of thousands more are set to join that tally next month.

Provincial

New protein-based COVID-19 vaccine could help boost rates, say pharmacists

For New Brunswickers who have been hesitant or unable to get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, there's now a new option, [CBC reports](#). Novavax Nuvaxovid, the first protein-based COVID vaccine authorized for use in Canada for people 18 and older, became available in New Brunswick last week, according to the Department of Health. There are about 320 doses in the province. Only 4 pharmacies are administering them—one each in Fredericton, Dieppe, Saint John and Miramichi. Ayub Chishti, pharmacist and manager of the Fredericton location—Campus Pharmacy—said the uptake so far "hasn't been that great." But what Novavax Nuvaxovid has done, he said, is encourage some people who are unvaccinated to finally get

their shot. Chishti vaccinated about 10 people at a Nuvaxovid clinic last week and has another 10 booked at a clinic this Thursday. He estimates about half of them “would not have got the vaccine if it wasn’t for this one.”

New program in Maritimes prescribes ‘nature’

Canada’s first national nature prescription initiative—the PaRx (Parks Prescriptions) program—has launched in the Maritimes. This means health professionals in all provinces can now formally prescribe nature to their patients. “There are an endless number of benefits that we can get from nature in terms of improving anxiety, improving depression, helping us focus better, reducing symptoms of ADHD, and improving our concentration,” Jacqueline Mincis, the Maritimes launch coordinator [told Moncton’s 91.9 The Bend](#). The program was first launched in BC and has since expanded to several areas, including the Maritimes. The program already has a growing list of professional groups endorsing it, including the New Brunswick Medical Society and the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia.

National

Being with unvaccinated people increases COVID-19 risk for those who are vaccinated: modelling study

While remaining unvaccinated against COVID-19 is often framed as a personal choice, those who spurn the vaccines raise the risk of infection for those around them, a new study suggests. The research, [published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal](#), found that vaccinated people who mix with those who are not vaccinated have a significantly greater chance of being infected than those who stick with people who have received the shot. In contrast, unvaccinated people’s risk of contracting COVID-19 drops when they spend time with people who are vaccinated, because they serve as a buffer to transmission, according to the mathematical model used in the study. David Fisman, the study’s co-author from the University of Toronto’s Dalla Lana School of Public Health, said the message of the study is that the choice to get vaccinated can’t be thought of as merely personal. “You may like to drive your car 200 kilometres an hour and think that’s fun, but we don’t allow you to do that on a highway partly because you can kill and injure yourself, but also because you’re creating risk for those around you,” he said [in an interview with the Canadian Press](#).

Majority of Canadian employees at risk of burnout amid prolonged pandemic: survey

A majority of Canadian employees feel they’re at risk of experiencing burnout as the coronavirus pandemic drags on, [according to Benefits Canada](#). The Mercer survey, which polled 11 000 employers and employees from 16 countries, found 59% of employer respondents are concerned about high employee sickness/absence rates and remote worker fatigue, ranking both in their top 5 workforce concerns for 2022. In terms of the steps employers are taking to help employees manage family responsibilities, habits and life goals, 73% said they invested in new health programs last year, while 35% are prioritizing inclusive workforce listening and participation this year, 31% are planning to expand benefits eligibility and 26% are planning to

offer digital health checks. Employees have a desire for more flexibility—they want more flexibility in their benefits and they want to work with an organization that understands their unique needs, according to Nicole Landsiedel, a senior associate at Mercer. Close to two-thirds of employee respondents said they'd join a company if they can work remotely or in a hybrid arrangement.

Mednow urges Canadians to consider a digital pharmacist

Toronto-based digital pharmacy Mednow has [launched](#) its first national campaign to build awareness of its brand and coax Canadians who might be wary of digital pharmacies to switch from more traditional, brick-and-mortar businesses. Ipsos data confirms that Canadians worry about their ability to consult with a pharmacist, the overall cost of and the reliability of delivery from digital pharmacies. Further research by the company has confirmed that the concept is “still new” for Canadians, and the brick-and-mortar experience has “been accepted as normal,” said Leo Tamburri, creative director at Mednow. “Our goal with this campaign is to show that there’s a better way.” Because many Canadians choose their pharmacy based on proximity and convenience, he said Mednow is looking to show that it can be the best for both—because everything can be done from anywhere, and the products will be delivered directly to their doors.

PHAC 2021 Canadian Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System report released

As part of the Government of Canada’s commitment to addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) [released](#) the 2021 Canadian Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System report. This [report](#) includes data on priority AMR organisms and antimicrobial use in humans, animals and crops. Key findings from the report are available as an [infographic](#), and a public-facing [interactive dashboard](#) on human antimicrobial use has been launched. In addition, PHAC, in collaboration with the National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases and the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools will be hosting a webinar on April 28 to discuss the key findings.

International

US: Walgreens, Teva accused of fuelling opioid addiction in quest for new markets

Walgreens Boots Alliance and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries ignored the health risks when they created new markets for opioids, a lawyer for the city of San Francisco told a judge April 25 during opening statements of the first trial to target manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies over the addictive pain medicines, [according to Reuters](#). Richard Heimann said the prescription drug industry was complicit in expanding the market for opioids, regardless of the public health risks. Opioids previously had been restricted for use in surgery, cancer treatment and end-of-life care, but the pharmaceutical industry made false claims about the drugs’ safety in order to market the drugs to patients suffering from common and chronic conditions like lower back pain and arthritis, he said. “The goal was to create a new market,” Heimann said. San Francisco has said that pharmacy chain Walgreens, drugmakers Teva Pharmaceutical and AbbVie Inc.’s Allergan unit, and drug distributor Anda, which is owned by Teva, created a “public nuisance” by

flooding the city with prescription opioids and failing to prevent the drugs from being diverted for illegal use. The companies have denied the allegations, saying that they sold opioid medications that were prescribed by doctors.

US: Biden administration starts COVID treatment push, focusing on Paxlovid

The Biden administration announced a series of initiatives aimed at increasing the use of antiviral pills to treat COVID-19, with a particular focus on Pfizer's Paxlovid, [STAT reports](#). The first step will be simply to make Paxlovid and Merck's molnupiravir—another oral antiviral treatment—available at more places. Administration officials said they plan to nearly double the number of locations where the drugs are available, including pharmacies, community health centres, urgent care centres and Veterans Affairs clinics. Currently, the drugs are available at 20 000 locations, but the number is expected to jump to more than 30 000.

UK: Medicine supply chain issues fuelling rise in abuse towards pharmacists, report finds

Two-thirds of pharmacy staff in England have experienced aggression from patients amid medicine supply chain issues, [according to a new report from the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee \(PSNC\)](#), which represents community pharmacies in England. The vast majority of pharmacies experienced a significant increase in medicine delivery issues, with more than half of respondents saying drug shortages are a daily occurrence. England's community pharmacies played a vital role during the pandemic, including offering COVID-19 vaccines, and are under renewed pressure, which is being worsened by rising operating costs and by a workforce crisis. Drug shortages were causing extra workload and stress for staff, while patients were becoming increasingly frustrated and inconvenienced by not being able to get their medication, with 75% of pharmacies reporting abuse from patients as a result, the survey found. The rising abuse has impacted staff well-being, with 49% of pharmacy teams citing patient abuse as one of the main reasons why they are not coping at work. Janet Morrison, CEO of PSNC, said [in an interview with ITV](#) that the government “must take heed of these findings and work with us to urgently address the causes.”

UK: High-level trust in pharmacists, new study reveals

A new study has revealed that public trust in services provided by local pharmacies ranks highest in the UK, although confidence in the National Health Service (NHS) has nose-dived following the pandemic, [the Pharmacy Business website reports](#). The 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer report published on April 21 found that around 78% of respondents trust their local pharmacies, the highest for any provider cited in the survey. As well, 72% said pharmacists are among the most trusted to tell the truth about health matters and protect public health—almost similar to “my doctor” (75%) and health experts (74%). A deeper look at the data also reveals that pharmaceutical companies specifically have enjoyed a 12-point rise in trust compared to a pre-pandemic study and are no longer seen as distrusted in the UK.

In Depth

Almost half of Canadians may have caught COVID

Canada's COVID-19 immunity landscape has completely transformed since the emergence of Omicron, with new estimates suggesting that almost half of the population has been infected. "We have had millions of infections in the last few months, most of them undocumented," said Dr. David Naylor, who led the federal inquiry into the 2003 SARS epidemic and now co-chairs the federal government's COVID-19 immunity task force. "I would not be surprised if the true number is over 10 million nationally by the end of the sixth wave," he said. [CBC examines](#) the issue.

Worth Repeating

"This is a good program, but there are gaps in the gap program." —Rich Rego, an addiction medicine pharmacist at the Beacon Pharmacy in downtown Calgary, [says many Albertans facing addiction](#) can't always access their life-saving medications due to medication coverage issues

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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