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Canadian
Pharmacists
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Association des
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du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

February 2, 2022

CPhA

Canadian Pharmacy Mental Health and Workplace Wellness Survey: Have your say

As a first step in its recently announced [Pharmacy Workforce Wellness initiative](#), CPhA has launched 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 front-line experiences to government, key stakeholders and the public and advocate for more pharmacy supports," says Danielle Paes, chief pharmacist officer. **Survey closes Feb. 7 at 10am ET.** (Aussi disponible [en français](#))

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-Chowdhury, 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.](#)

New patient information resource: Getting the most out of your pharmacy visit during COVID-19

Our pharmacy teams are busier than ever. To help patients and pharmacy staff, CPhA has developed a [new patient information handout](#) that provides a few simple tips for patients heading out for their next pharmacy visit. (Aussi disponible [en français](#))

Pharmacists on the front line

Ayub Chishti: The pharmacist behind UNB's Campus Pharmacy

On a Monday morning, Ayub Chishti walks around his pharmacy preparing prescriptions and paperwork. A student drops by minutes before opening and asks for advice on a skin infection. This is common practice for Chishti. He is used to students stopping by since he opened the Campus Pharmacy in 2016 at the University of New Brunswick. In his shop, students can find everything from cold medicine to pregnancy tests on the shelves. He tries to keep prices low and makes his own chapstick to sell in-house. "When [people] see this pharmacy, they see a very small pharmacy, but we have everything that a big pharmacy has—and actually we might even have more," said Chishti in [an interview with the Aquinian](#). Behind the counter, Chishti and his team can diagnose students, do check-ups and fill prescriptions. The province recognized the Campus Pharmacy as a primary caregiver on Sept. 1, a change that Chishti said, "is really quite historical."

Provincial

St. Catharines pharmacist proud to help with the 'heavy-lifting' of combatting vaccine misinformation

When it comes to the chance to educate people about the COVID-19 vaccine, pharmacists say they're not throwing away their shot, [reports the St. Catharines Standard](#). In St. Catharines, pharmacist Tejal Patel said that since they've been allowed to administer the shots, her team has been extremely busy. Patel encourages anyone still experiencing vaccine hesitancy to come speak to their pharmacist about their concerns. "We as pharmacists are so approachable, and I always say if you have any questions, come and ask rather than avoiding the vaccine," she said. "We have to understand that right now it's so easy to share news, and it's very difficult to know whether it's something that's been authenticated, that has been looked into, read, proofread. That's why I always tell people to come to come and talk to us." Jen Belcher, vice president of strategic initiatives and member relations for the Ontario Pharmacist Association (OPA), said that continued vaccine hesitancy has been an issue across the province, but pharmacists are ready to calm concerns.

How pharmacies are stepping in to fill primary-care gaps

With almost 40,000 people on New Brunswick's primary-care wait lists, the province and New Brunswickers are looking to pharmacies to help bridge the gap, [reports CBC](#). In recent months the province has been decreasing restrictions on what pharmacists can do for patients. Since October, pharmacists have been able to assess and prescribe medication for non-urgent urinary

tract infections (UTIs) under Medicare. This week the province said it would allow pharmacists to renew prescriptions at no cost to the patient, whether they have a primary care provider or not, and without having to prove it's an emergency. New Brunswick pharmacists have been able to [assess and treat 32 minor ailments](#), including herpes simplex, or cold ungal infections and nicotine dependency, with no need for a doctor or nurse to be involved. Patients have had to pay a fee of \$20 to \$25 for treatment for all of the 32 conditions. But recently, the province has begun to "uncomplicate" UTIs under Medicare in pharmacies, said Jake Reid, executive director of the New Brunswick Pharmacists' Association (NBPA). Reid said the primary reasons people ended up in an emergency room when they could have been treated at a pharmacy. Reid said the association continues to call on the province to cover the cost of the remaining illnesses treated by pharmacists.

Hesitancy and holidays affected youth vaccine rates: NBPA

Administering COVID-19 vaccines in children aged 5 to 11 has proven to be a tall task for New Brunswick pharmacists, [reports Country 94.1](#). Statistics last updated Jan. 31 show that just 54.9% of children in that age group have received their first dose, despite eligibility opening up in late November. There seem to be several different reasons stopping parents from having their children vaccinated, according to NBPA executive director Jake Reid. "We know that there was some hesitancy early on from parents and caregivers who are just concerned and want to make sure these are safe vaccines for their children," he said. According to Reid, that has played a part in New Brunswick being a couple of weeks behind projections. In-school vaccination clinics have proven to be successful; however, the start of the rollout coming just weeks before the holiday season may have created barriers for some families. "It just goes to show that there's a certain convenience factor there when you can make it easily accessible for people," he said.

AIDS committee, pharmacies team up to dispense safe injection supplies in western Newfoundland

A partnership between the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador and some pharmacies in Western Newfoundland is proving to be very beneficial, enabling more people in the region who use injection drugs to get the safe supplies they need, [says CBC](#). The AIDS committee's Safe Works Access Program, or SWAP, provides kits that include things like syringes, sterile water and tourniquets to ensure that people who use drugs don't share or reuse syringes and, as a result, run the risk of contracting blood-borne infections. Chris Randell of the Medicine Shoppe said he just wanted to keep people from getting hurt. "Most of these people that come in, they all have their own stories, their own reasons, and we want to make sure that we're there to hand them out stuff that is going to provide them with a much safer environment," he says. Randell first picked up on the need in Corner Brook when clients at his pharmacy inquired about buying diabetic syringes, which most people with diabetes no longer use as pre-filled insulin pens are now more the norm. When he heard about the SWAP kits, Randell said, he immediately wanted to help with harm reduction. Since the Medicine Shoppe in Corner Brook got involved, nearly every other pharmacy in the city has partnered with the AIDS committee to also offer the SWAP kits.

National

Scientists say COVID-19 booster intake is waning, urge Canadians to book their shots

Across Canada, there have been booster clinics and vaccine days, all to get more Canadians their shots—but recently, the drive to get shots into arms has hit a curb and health officials say they've been noticing enthusiasm waning. Although the advent of Omicron has spurred regions to open up booster shots to more ages, the rate of Canadians getting booster shots has gone down. So far, about 30 million Canadians are double-vaccinated. As of the most recent data, only 15 million third doses have been given out. “To get the best bang for your buck, you really should be getting the booster,” Mina Tadrous, an assistant professor at the University of Toronto, [told CTV News](#). “As a pharmacist, I see these conversations a lot and I have them with people,” Tadrous said. “When they talk about, ‘why do I need a booster, I thought you told me two doses and this thing’s over.’ So this is again, supportive of the need for boosters and the continued action and call for Canadians to get boosters if they’re eligible.” Tadrous added that studies that track vaccine effectiveness during a rollout are important because they provide real-world data that can reveal things clinical trials may have missed. “When we roll something out into the real world, it goes to everybody,” Tadrous said. “With vaccines, that may have been limited to some populations, and so what it looks like in the real world is really important.”

Canada gets failing grade when it comes to adult vaccination for flu, pneumonia, shingles: report

A national review of Canada’s rate of adult vaccination for non-COVID-19 preventable illnesses, such as the flu and shingles, has found that many provinces are lacking, despite COVID-19 proving that robust vaccine efforts are possible, [says CTV](#). CanAge, Canada’s National Seniors’ Advocacy Organization [released a “report card” grading Canada’s adult vaccination efforts](#) during 2021, a follow-up to their first report in 2020. The country scored a D- overall, with Prince Edward Island and Ontario being the 2 best performing provinces. “Last year’s report showed some worrying trends across the country in the area of adult vaccination,” says Laura Tamblyn Watts, CEO of CanAge, in a press release. “This year we were looking for major improvements, especially in light of lessons learned about the importance of vaccine uptake during the pandemic. Unfortunately, while there are pockets of progress, the national picture is still grim.” Take a look at [CPhA’s pharmacists’ vaccination authority chart](#) for an overview of immunizations pharmacists in each province/territory are authorized to administer.

International

US: NYC offering free home delivery of COVID antiviral pills, though supply is limited

On Jan. 30, New York City officials said that they were launching a program for residents to get antiviral COVID pills delivered directly to their homes for free, though supplies of the drugs remained limited, [reports the New York Times](#). The city will provide Paxlovid, developed by Pfizer, and molnupiravir, developed by Merck. Both drugs will be distributed by Alto Pharmacy, a telehealth prescription medication provider the city has partnered with. Though the city’s website

said both Paxlovid and molnupiravir were in stock, it was not immediately clear how many treatment courses were available, and the mayor's office did not immediately respond to questions about the city's supply. Earlier this month, [Alto Pharmacy said it had run out of Paxlovid pills](#) within a week after receiving about 1300 doses in late December. Scarce supplies of the antiviral pills and other COVID-19 treatments have [plagued hospitals and pharmacies](#) across the country.

US: Mark Cuban's new cost-plus-15% generic drug company is really a compounding pharmacy

Shark Tank's Mark Cuban made a splash last week in the world of drug pricing, pledging to cut out costly PBMs and deliver on a very simple plan with his new pharmacy, and some huge cost savings for consumers, [says End Points News](#). The company, known as Mark Cuban Cost Plus Drug Company, pledges to charge only a 15% mark-up for its generic drugs, offering alternatives to a market often prone to shortages, and expensive generic drugs due to lack of competition. But while the company labels itself a drug company and pledges to get into generic drug manufacturing of its own in a Houston-based cGMP facility, it is really planning to operate as a compounding pharmacy. Becoming a 503(b) compounding pharmacy, also known as an outsourcing facility, means the firm will be less regulated than a typical generic drug company, but Cuban's company will need to register with the FDA, be inspected by the FDA and adhere to specific manufacturing requirements.

Australia: Doctors say pharmacist UTI extension 'a recipe for disaster'

In January the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and Queensland University of Technology (QUT) announced that Queensland Health would be extending the Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot—Queensland until June 30, 2022. The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Royal Australian College of GPs issued a statement claiming that “a decision by Queensland Health to allow pharmacists to prescribe antibiotics without medical review or investigations for urinary tract infections (UTI) in women risks wide ranging adverse health repercussions including delayed diagnosis of cancer,” [according to the Australian Pharmacy Journal \(APJ\)](#). Under the trial, participating pharmacists will be able to sell and supply trimethoprim, or nitrofurantoin if trimethoprim is not appropriate for the patient, or cefalexin if trimethoprim and nitrofurantoin are not appropriate for the patient. They are only able to do this where they reasonably believe the sale and supply of the restricted drug is essential for the woman's well-being. At the time the extension was announced, pilot lead Professor Lisa Nissen, Head of the School of Clinical Sciences at QUT, said she was pleased with the pilot's uptake, noting that “The pilot's success, with 6300 patients, has illustrated the key role community pharmacy can play in reducing pressure on public health.” Pharmacy Guild Queensland branch president Chris Owen declined to comment on the urologists' comments. “All I'll say is the circumstances haven't changed from when the pilot was initially approved,” he said. “Once the trial has finished, we'll see the report from the government.”

Moderna or Pfizer: Which vaccine is a better booster? Experts weigh in

Until there's some future vaccine designed specifically to target the highly transmissible Omicron variant, adults in Canada are encouraged to get their booster shot as soon as possible—which means either Pfizer or Moderna. Both mRNA vaccines offer significant protection against breakthrough infections and hospitalizations, but new research from data collected before Omicron hit shows that Moderna's vaccine may offer slightly better protection compared to Pfizer. That may surprise people who had been turning Moderna down, said Kelly Grindrod, a pharmacist and associate professor at the University of Waterloo school of pharmacy. "They walk away from it because they think it's a lesser vaccine," she told Dr. Brian Goldman, host of [CBC podcast The Dose](#). "But the evidence doesn't say Moderna is a lesser vaccine. Actually, it's quite the opposite."

Worth Repeating

"As a community, we wanted to find a way to let her know we love her and thank her for all of her service." — Wendy Parliament, one of many residents of Sharbot Lake, ON, [on coming together](#) around their pharmacist of 30 years, Jocelyn Whelan, who has received a grave prognosis.

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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