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The Weekly: CPhA's Pharmacy News Update for March 2

From: Canadian Pharmacists Association <advocacy@pharmacists.ca>**Sent:** March 2, 2022 5:00 PM**Subject:** The Weekly: CPhA's Pharmacy News Update for March 2View in [browser](#) / Afficher dans le navigateur [Web](#)

Canadian
Pharmacists
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The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

March 2, 2022**CPhA*****It's Pharmacy Appreciation Month! We're celebrating and here's how you can too***

March is [Pharmacy Appreciation Month](#) (PAM) in Canada—the annual national campaign that shines a spotlight on all things pharmacy and celebrates the extraordinary efforts and contributions of pharmacy professionals to Canada's health-care system. Here's an overview of how CPhA is celebrating this month:

- **31 Days of Pharmacy** – Each day, CPhA will be shining a light on one of the many amazing pharmacy professionals and pharmacy teams on social media. [Email us](#) a picture of yourself or your pharmacy team in action, with the name and location (city and province/territory) of your pharmacy and the full names of any team members in the photo.
- **The Great #PAM2022Playlist** – We're calling on the pharmacy community to help curate the ultimate soundtrack to PAM. [Send us your favourite songs](#) to go with the themes we've suggested.
- **#MyFavePharm Patient Contest** – We're asking patients to tell us why they love their pharmacy team by filling out a [nomination form](#) for a chance to win a tablet for themselves and their favourite pharmacy team member.

For more information on how you can get involved, check out our [communications toolkit](#) and join the conversation on social media using the hashtags #PAM2022 and #ThankYouPharmacy.

Pharmacy Appreciation Month: What's on across the country

It's time to march into March, a month full of celebration for the work carried out by Canada's pharmacy teams. Join CPhA and pharmacy associations across Canada in celebrating PAM and the pharmacy teams that have done so much for our communities. [In an article in Canadian Healthcare Network](#), Danielle Paes, CPhA's chief pharmacist officer, said the tenor of PAM is moving from a pre-pandemic focus on advocacy and awareness about the profession to a message of appreciation for the work pharmacy teams have carried out in the past year. Aside from the usual celebratory activities this month, Paes said CPhA will also release the results of a survey of mental health in the pharmacy profession. "We know that pharmacy teams have been under a tremendous amount of pressure, especially during the latest Omicron wave, so we recently conducted a national survey to get a pulse on the profession's mental health and some of the workforce challenges we've been having," Paes said. "PAM is a time to appreciate and celebrate, and we also want it to be an opportunity to acknowledge the challenges that we have faced as well."

CPhA submission on potential pan-Canadian formulary highlights concerns around reduced drug coverage, shortages

On February 25, CPhA sent a [written submission](#) to the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) regarding the proposed framework for a potential pan-Canadian prescription drug formulary. While CPhA is generally supportive of the framework developed by the panel, we also highlight in the submission several implications with respect to the use and implementation of such a formulary, which must be discussed and considered early in this process. This includes concerns if the outcome contributes to policy initiatives that result in interrupted or reduced drug coverage, or bulk purchasing that can significantly restrict drug availability and lead to drug shortages. In addition, CPhA recommends the formulary be used as a tool to help secure the Canadian drug supply.

CPhA calls for investments to support health-care workers in pre-budget submission

CPhA [submitted a brief](#) in response to the 2022 federal pre-budget consultation on February 25. Given the significant health workforce shortages and declining mental health and burnout facing pharmacists and their teams, our recommendations to the federal government focus on these 2 key priority issues. In the submission, CPhA calls for federal investments in mental health supports for health-care workers along with a number of targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing health human resources strategies to strengthen the recruitment and retention of health-care workers.

Provincial

Lag in kids' cancer-preventing vaccine uptake worries BC health officials

The vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV) has been offered for free in BC schools since 2008. It is proven to be safe and dramatically reduces the risk of cervical and other cancers, making it one of the only known cancer-preventing vaccines. But, [according to the Vancouver Sun](#), HPV vaccine uptake lags significantly behind other kinds of immunizations for BC schoolchildren and behind most other Canadian provinces. BC Centre for Disease Control statistics show that while 91% of Grade 6 students were up to date on their immunizations for hepatitis B and 87% were up to date for chicken pox, only 64% of students across the province were up to date for the HPV vaccine. In the Fraser East region, which includes Abbotsford and Chilliwack, HPV vaccine coverage for that age was at 53%. In some parts of Canada, HPV vaccination rates are near 90% for school-age kids, which is BC's target. But BC's rate has remained stubbornly low for more than a decade, frustrating public health officials.

Pharmacists, nurse practitioners to provide collaborative health care in pilot project at 2 Nova Scotia pharmacies

A new pilot project announced in Nova Scotia will see pharmacists and nurse practitioners in Truro and New Glasgow provide health care through a model being called "Pharmacist Walk-In Clinic +," [the Halifax Examiner reports](#). "It's a collaborative approach, and it's anticipated to alleviate some of the pressure on local emergency departments for health concerns that can be appropriately treated in a walk-in clinic setting by these primary health care professionals," Nova Scotia Health interim president and CEO Karen Oldfield said. The project builds on the pharmacist walk-in clinic model in operation at the New Glasgow Lawtons' site. Pharmacist Michelle Stewart has been providing care at the New Glasgow pharmacist walk-in clinic since it opened in May 2021. She said she is excited to be part of a project that's improving access to health care for people in rural communities. "When you picture a typical pharmacy, you might think of a storefront with a retail space, a dispensary where the pharmacy team is located," Stewart explained. "But in a clinical setting like our New Glasgow walk-in, I am that same pharmacist, but rather than oversee the activities of the dispensary, my priority is to see patients one-on-one." Stewart said having dedicated and focused time with each patient allows her to help with things like supporting chronic disease management and health promotion.

National

Public health mandates could return, Tam warns, but favours lighter touch in future

Canadian governments should be ready to resume public health measures if another serious variant of COVID-19 emerges, even as they scale back mandates for masks and vaccines, the country's chief public health officer says. [According to the Canadian Press](#), several provinces have announced plans to put an end to COVID-19 restrictions, signalling a return to normalcy now that the Omicron wave is receding. Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam said she indeed hopes Canada is past the pandemic crisis and is now in a transition phase, headed toward recovery. But it's still uncertain what the novel coronavirus that has upended life around the world for nearly 2 years will do next, and she said Canada must be ready to bring some public health measures back if case counts begin to rise sharply again. The latest data shows

Canada is headed in a good direction. Weekly case counts are down by 26% nationally, Tam said, and the number of people with COVID-19 in hospitals and intensive care units has declined by more than 20% since the week of February 13. There are still 6228 new cases in Canada as of February 24 and that figure is an underestimate since many jurisdictions have restricted molecular tests to people at a high risk.

Health Canada calls for health professionals to report adverse reactions associated with cannabis

The February edition of Health Canada's [Health Product InfoWatch](#) contains a call for health-care professionals to report any adverse reactions associated with cannabis. Health Canada's ability to monitor health and safety issues with cannabis depends on reporting from health-care professionals, consumers and licence holders. Health-care professionals are encouraged to [report any adverse reactions](#) associated with cannabis, regardless of its use, to Health Canada, even if certain information is unknown or missing. This is particularly important when involving vulnerable populations, including children or the elderly, or adverse reactions of interest, including suspected vaping-associated lung illness or cannabis-drug interactions, regardless of how the cannabis was obtained.

International

Ukraine: Pharmacies remain open in Kyiv and across Ukraine

Pharmacies resumed work in Kyiv and across Ukraine on February 28 as large lineups gathered near working pharmacies in the capital, [Interfax-Ukraine reports](#). In particular, Pharmacia municipal reported on the resumption of work of pharmacies as of noon on the same date, with 37 of the network's pharmacies open in different districts of the capital. In most of them, insulin was able to be purchased as part of the reimbursement program. The Apteka Dobroho Dnia chain also reported 271 of its pharmacies were open, while 1100 of the Liki24 service's partner pharmacies were operating.

Ukraine: Fears of medical shortages and disease in Ukraine after Russian invasion

Ukraine is running low on critical medical supplies and has had to halt urgent efforts to curb a polio outbreak since Russia invaded the country last week, public health experts say. Fears of a wider public health crisis are growing as people flee their homes, health services are interrupted and supplies fail to reach Ukraine, which has also been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, [Reuters reports](#). Medical needs are already acute, with the World Health Organization (WHO) warning on March 1 that some facilities already had no oxygen left. On February 28, humanitarian relief organization Project HOPE said pharmacies in all Ukrainian cities under attack were reporting running out of medical supplies. WHO spokesperson Tarik Jasarevic said routine immunization and outbreak control efforts for polio have been suspended in Ukraine. WHO has received reports that coronavirus vaccination campaigns have also been put on hold in many parts of the country, he added. The UN agency for HIV/AIDS has reported that there is less than a month's worth of drugs for HIV patients left in Ukraine. "People living with HIV in Ukraine only have a few

weeks of antiretroviral therapy remaining with them, and without continuous access their lives are at risk," said Winnie Byanyima, the executive director of UNAIDS.

US: Biden announces new COVID-19 initiative to give Americans free treatment medication at pharmacies

US President Joe Biden said his administration has launched a new initiative that will allow Americans to get tested for COVID-19 at a pharmacy and immediately receive a free pill if they test positive, [Reuters reports](#). "We're launching the 'Test to Treat' initiative so people can get tested at a pharmacy, and if they're positive, receive antiviral pills on the spot, at no cost," Biden said during his State of the Union speech. The United States has ordered more of these treatments than any other country in the world, Biden said, adding Pfizer will offer the US 1 million pills in March and more than double that in April. The Pfizer treatment, he said, reduces the chances of ending up in the hospital by 90%.

UK: Using community pharmacies more could save NHS £640m a year while easing pressure on GPs

Around 40 million more general practitioner appointments in England could be transferred to pharmacies every year if patients with minor ailments were to use them for advice and treatment instead of going to their doctor, [according to the Yorkshire Post](#). This would allow family doctors to spend around 8 million more hours in appointments with those who need it most, according to the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC). The body, which represents all 11 200 community pharmacies in England, also calls for local minor ailments services that are available in some areas to be rolled out nationally. This could mean pharmacists would be able to offer consultations and supply prescription-only treatments for some conditions without having to rely so heavily on doctors. "The benefits of an enhanced pharmacy walk-in service to the public and to the NHS are clear, and we hope the NHS and Government will act on this," said Alastair Buxton, PSNC's director of NHS services.

UK: 'Massive drop' in safe pharmacy staffing levels in 2021, finds PDA

There was a "massive drop" in safe staffing levels in 2021, and working conditions in pharmacies generally worsened, a Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) survey has suggested, [as reported in Chemist+Druggist](#). A total of 1337 pharmacists—of which 81% said they work in community pharmacy—responded to the 2021 survey, which ran between October and November of last year, the PDA wrote in a [report](#) of the findings. The union flagged a "massive drop in safe staffing levels" last year, with 76% saying the staffing levels where they work are safe "none of the time," the "minority of the time" or "around half of the time." This is up significantly from 51% who agreed in 2020, the PDA said. The union again used the opportunity to urge employers to [address recruitment and retention issues](#) in community pharmacy.

Australia: North Queensland pharmacy scope practice pilot will put vulnerable patients at risk, doctors say

The Queensland state government is under fire over a trial plan to allow pharmacists to diagnose

and treat chronic health conditions, including in remote Aboriginal communities, [ABC News reports](#). Multiple organizations and a group of 175 doctors have voiced their opposition to the trial. Opponents allege the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has been pushing the program to improve its bottom line. The Guild, however, says the aim is to help ease the burden on general practitioners and that doctors are refusing to collaborate, while Queensland Health says the pilot will be subject to “strict governance and reporting requirements.”

In Depth

McMaster study takes aims to tackle ‘double standard’ of vaccine hesitancy

Each morning, countless Canadians open up their medicine cabinets, fill a glass of water and take medication prescribed to them by their doctor. Patients have been briefed on the potential side effects, but in turn, they understand the benefits of taking the medication, which outweigh the risks. A [new research paper](#) from McMaster University’s DeGroote School of Business is taking aim to address that “double standard” when it comes to vaccine hesitancy around safety. Read more on the research [here](#).

Worth Repeating

“Why does that pharmacist have to be 2 and a half feet higher than everybody else?” –Jerry Seinfeld. What better way to kick off Pharmacy Appreciation Month than by revisiting *Seinfeld’s* classic [“Pharmacists”](#) routine.

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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