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Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

Save the date: Re-imagining Pharmacy Practice presentation on June 4

The New Brunswick Pharmacists' Association and CPhA are co-hosting a special presentation on June 4 at 4 pm ET. The "Re-imagining Pharmacy Practice" presentation will feature a talk from Mark Stelow, the president and CEO of People Before Patients, on exploring a brighter and bolder tomorrow for pharmacy. The event is sponsored by GSK. [Register now.](#)

New posters for your pharmacy to discourage aggressive behaviour

According to our 2022 Canadian Pharmacy Mental Health and Workforce Wellness Survey, 48% of pharmacists experience abuse or harassment from patients at least weekly. We know that these encounters are stressful for all involved and can cause serious harm to the mental health and well-being of pharmacy staff and other patients. CPhA has created 2 printable posters that you can display in your pharmacy as a visual reminder that aggressive behaviour is not tolerated and that your pharmacy team is here to help.

[Download the posters.](#)

Pharmacy on the front lines

Sarnia, ON, pharmacist recognized with local Community Living award

When Community Living Sarnia-Lambton calls, Amgad Kiwan answers. “Anything urgent, everybody has my cellphone,” the pharmacist and owner at Sarnia Pharmacy [told Sarnia This Week](#). Kiwan has been nominated for this year’s Community Living Hero Award, which recognizes organizations and people for contributing to more inclusive communities. Since 2009, he has helped provide medication administration training for Community Living employees, responded when emergencies arise, made regular visits at the residences the agency has for people with disabilities and conducted medication reviews, said Shannon Grimme, a supervisor at 2 of the agency’s residences. “Amgad has gone out of his way to ensure that we have direct access to him 24/7, even on holidays, when I’m sure he’d much rather be focusing on his family than work,” she said. “That is commitment.”

Provincial

BC pharmacists can prescribe for minor ailments, contraception starting June 1

Starting this week, British Columbians will have easier access to prescriptions for certain minor ailments and contraception, [KelownaNow reports](#). Effective June 1, pharmacies across the province will be able to prescribe for acne, dermatitis, fungal and bacterial infections, shingles, and other ailments. The expanded power of pharmacists to renew and issue some prescriptions was announced in September 2022 in an effort to relieve pressure on the province’s struggling health-care system. In October, pharmacists were able to administer more vaccines and renew prescriptions for up to a 2-year period for people whose family doctor had retired or left their practices. “We know that people are facing real challenges right now and there is much more work to do, and this strategy will guide our next steps in building a strong, resilient public healthcare system now and in the future,” Minister of Health Adrian Dix said when the initiative was announced. In addition to the medications for minor

ailments, pharmacists will be able to prescribe contraception and emergency contraception, both of which became free on April 1.

Manitoba pharmacies running low on take-home naloxone kits

A shortage in the number of free naloxone kits available through a government program has some pharmacies and organizations that distribute the life-saving drug in Manitoba concerned, [CBC reports](#). A provincial spokesperson said a transition to a new supplier in addition to more need in the community are behind a supply issue in its take-home naloxone program, which is being addressed. The province said it's getting more kits to fill back orders and expects within the coming weeks to have enough naloxone to meet any future orders. Brett Roeland, pharmacist and manager of Northway Pharmacy Brothers on Selkirk Avenue, said his pharmacy hasn't been able to get kits for 3 months. "If we have a medication out there that can save lives but we're not able to get it into people's hands I think that's quite concerning for everyone," Roeland said. The province confirmed to the pharmacy on May 25 that they're sending some kits, which Roeland said will be a relief to the community.

National

Spending on antidiabetic drugs in Canada outpaces overall drug market, says PMPRB

The Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB), through the National Prescription Drug Utilization Information System research initiative, [has released](#) the latest edition of the *Market Intelligence Report: Antidiabetic Drugs, 2012-2021*, which examines the market for drugs used in the treatment of diabetes. The report, released on May 30, estimates the cost burden of diabetes in Canada is around \$29 billion annually. The report reveals that antidiabetic drug growth outpaced the overall drug market, effectively doubling the market share for these drugs from 4.2% to 7.9% between 2012 and 2021. This growth reflects a shift to new classes of drugs for the treatment of diabetes resulting in a similar increase in the cost per capita for anti-diabetic drugs. It is estimated that 5.7 million Canadians have diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes, and another 6 million Canadians are likely prediabetic.

International

US: FDA issues warning about some compounded versions of semaglutide for diabetes, weight loss

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning on May 30 about compounded versions of the drug semaglutide, which is approved for treatment of diabetes and excess weight, [CNN reports](#). Semaglutide, a type of drug called a GLP-1 agonist, is FDA-approved as Ozempic and Rybelsus to treat type 2 diabetes and as Wegovy to treat obesity. Both have been on the FDA's Drug Shortages list since last year. "When a drug is in shortage, compounders may be able to prepare a compounded version of that drug if they meet certain requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act," the FDA says, but the agency doesn't review these compounded versions for safety, effectiveness or quality. The FDA said it has received reports of adverse events in people who used compounded semaglutide and that patients "should not use a compounded drug if an approved drug is available." The Alliance for Pharmacy Compounding issued a [statement](#) last week advising consumers not to shop online for anything purported to be semaglutide if they don't have a prescription and can't verify that the seller is a licensed US pharmacy.

US: Pharmacy chain Walgreens Boots Alliance to cut corporate jobs by 10%

Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. said on May 26 it would slash its corporate staff by about 10%, as it streamlines operations and focuses on consumer-facing health-care businesses, [Reuters reports](#). None of the 504 roles being cut are based at its stores, micro-fulfillment outlets or call centres, a company spokesperson told Reuters. Walgreens, one of the largest US pharmacies, has been looking to expand beyond its core business, with acquisitions of health-care services operator VillageMD and urgent-care provider Summit Health. The company, which lost market share to its rivals after closing several stores during the pandemic, is aiming to regain it by the end of fiscal year 2023 by reducing the pay gap and increasing automation at fulfillment centres.

UK: Scottish pharmacists warn vital services face cuts due to rising costs

Pharmacists are warning they will have to cut services unless their rising costs are met by the Scottish government, [STV reports](#). The board of Community Pharmacy Scotland unanimously rejected a financial package from the Scottish government last week on behalf of Scotland's 1259 pharmacies, describing the offer for the 2023/24 financial year as "derisory." The organization is looking for a boost to its regular funding, in line with inflation, but says the current offer is "well short" of what is needed. In some cases, pharmacy owners say they are supplying medications at a loss to maintain continuity of care for patients. "We have had calls into the office that pharmacy owners are having to borrow to meet their costs," said Harry McQuillan, chief executive of Community Pharmacy Scotland. "That is not sustainable. If we don't have those rising costs met by a reasonable offer from the Scottish government then we will have to look at how things could be reduced to make sure our cost base is managed."

Australia: New palliative care training program on the way for pharmacists

Care Projects grants program. The Palliative Care Pharmacist Foundation training program will help improve pharmacists' capacity to provide palliative care, [according to a news release](#). PSA said it will also pilot a community palliative care pharmacist service model, with specialist palliative care pharmacists who have undertaken the training. Dr. Fei Sim, the national president of PSA, said the training program follows a number of palliative care education projects delivered by PSA. "These projects have enabled timely access to palliative care medicines and support for end-of-life care for people in residential care and at home," Sim said. "Upskilling local pharmacists in palliative care will increase the capacity of community palliative care teams, community pharmacists, and general practitioners to provide care to palliative care patients."

In Depth

Free prescription drugs could reduce overall health-care costs in Canada: study

Overall health-care costs could be reduced in Canada by providing free prescription drugs to patients, [according to a new study](#). Led by a researcher

from the University of Toronto's medical school, the 3-year study aimed to see how eliminating out-of-pocket medication fees would impact health-care system spending, particularly for patients who reported delaying or not taking prescription drugs due to costs. [CTV News explains](#) the findings.

What to know about natural health products as Canada ponders new regulations

Senators in Canada are deliberating new regulations that would mandate closer monitoring of side effects of natural health products. A part of Bill C-47, which implements several commitments made by the federal government under Budget 2023, would incorporate natural health products, such as herbal remedies and supplements, into Vanessa's Law, which requires hospitals to report any adverse reactions associated with the products. [CTV News explains](#) what you need to know about natural health products, the risks associated with these products and Canada's proposed regulations.

Worth Repeating

"Minor ailments [are] something that we're so familiar with and it's actually kind of empowering for us to be able to help patients, because it's similar to what we do every day in normal practice. So, now . . . instead of trying to help the patient find a walk-in clinic or a hospital that they have to go to, especially on weekends or late at night, [we're] able to finally provide that care. It just creates this amazing relationship with your patients because they trust you." —Toronto, ON, pharmacist Barbara Violo [tells BC pharmacists](#) ahead of scope of practice expansions in BC on June 1 about her experiences prescribing for minor ailments since January

This weekly update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. While we aim to ensure all information contained in this update is accurate, CPhA does not take responsibility for the content provided by other organizations and sources.