

**From:** Canadian Pharmacists Association <advocacy@pharmacists.ca>  
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# The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

**August 3, 2022**

**CPhA**

*Pharmacist-prescribed Paxlovid can help reduce strain on hospitals*

In a [CTV news story](#) which looked at accessing the antiviral Paxlovid, Dr. Danielle Paes, chief pharmacist officer at CPhA, called on governments to empower pharmacists to provide point-of-care testing and prescribe COVID-19 treatments such as Paxlovid. “Quebec was the first jurisdiction in the world to enable pharmacists to prescribe for Paxlovid and saw a marked increase in use of the COVID-19 antiviral, helping to keep patients out of hospitals. Other provinces have followed suit, but many have not yet enabled this critical service,” Paes said. “Pharmacist-prescribed Paxlovid is just one example of the kind of innovative community care that will reduce the strain on our hospitals while expanding access to the services and care Canadians rely on,” she added.

***Webinar recording available - Preventing COVID-19 in high-risk patients: Are pre-exposure monoclonal antibodies an option for patients unlikely to respond to vaccines?***

Did you miss our recent webinar on preventing COVID-19 in high-risk patients?

[Watch the recording](#) now to learn about pre-exposure monoclonal antibodies as a treatment option for patients with a lower immune response to COVID-19 infections.

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## Pharmacy on the front lines

***Amid low booster shot rates, Niagara-on-the-Lake pharmacist says COVID-19 'not going anywhere'***

Simpson's Pharmacy in Virgil, ON, was busier than ever this July: with the second COVID-19 booster dose now available for all adults in Ontario, its owner says dozens have been signing up to get their fourth jab, according to the [Niagara-on-the-Lake Advance](#). Ontario residents 18 years old and over became eligible for the second booster on July 13. Prior to that, 40% of eligible Ontarians (people 60 years old and over) got their fourth dose. "We're still glad people want to get vaccinated," said pharmacist Sean Simpson. "We're happy to be part of the solution." Simpson notes the first 2 doses were being administered when the pandemic was a more immediate concern, and when vaccine mandates and passports were in effect. "Whether you agree with them or not, they certainly played a role in increased doses," he said. Simpson said his pharmacy has been having issues accommodating everyone who wants a vaccine. "It's not as easy as folks might think," he said. When news drops from the province that eligibility will be opening up, Simpson said they don't get enough time to procure the amount of vaccines they need, or the staff to administer those shots. "It's difficult for us to really increase or expand our access on a moment's notice," he said. Right now, they're vaccinating people by appointment, with 10 appointments a day. Others are added to a waiting list — which, so far, has been working, he said. As the virus continues to evolve, Simpson said vaccinations are important to prevent hospitalizations. "COVID is not going anywhere: it seems like it's certainly here to stay," he said.

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## Provincial

***Cold, flu medication shortages impacting Ontario pharmacies in middle of summer wave***

A summer-sick wave paired with supply chain issues is making it harder for Ontarians to manage cold symptoms—such as a lingering cough—for residents and their young children, [reports City News](#). Jen Belcher of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) says the supply chain problem is being felt on a large scale. "We are seeing a shortage of these medications through the supply chain, which is resulting in pharmacies not being able to re-order medications as people purchase them," Belcher

said, noting that there have been a series of manufacturing issues of cold and flu medication. “Everything from the availability of raw ingredients to the manufacturing of the final product and warehousing.” A spokesperson for Loblaws acknowledged a shortage in these medicinal products. “We are actively working with our vendor partners to manage the flow of goods and ensure shelves are stocked as the product becomes available.”

***NB pharmacies ready to give COVID-19 vaccines to children 2 to 5 years old***

About 20 pharmacies will be vaccinating preschoolers against COVID-19, according to the New Brunswick Pharmacists' Association (NBPhA). The province's website lists 13 pharmacies offering appointments for children aged 2 to 5, as of July 28, but more will be added in the coming days, said executive director Jake Reid. “So it's really a handful of pharmacies compared to, for instance, the adult group,” he said in an [interview with CBC](#). More than 180 pharmacies offer COVID-19 vaccines to adults. Public Health and regional health authority clinics will handle vaccines for children between the ages of 6 months and 2 years, said Reid. Pharmacies aren't authorized to vaccinate children under 2. Until last year, their scope of practice was limited by the College of Pharmacists to children 5 and over, he noted. “So some may not feel that [2 to 5 is] an age group that they are particularly competent in working with,” he said.

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## National

***Canadian doctors stress importance of vaccinations after US reports its first case of polio in nearly a decade***

Canadian infection experts are taking note after US officials reported that an unvaccinated American was diagnosed with the country's first case of polio in nearly a decade, [says the Globe and Mail](#). Health Canada has not recorded a case of the virus in more than 25 years, but infectious disease experts say they always have their “ears up and eyes open for vaccine-preventable illnesses like polio” that continue to circulate elsewhere in the world. “Any imported infection is just a flight away,” said Dr. Vinita Dubey, associate medical officer of health for Toronto Public Health. The polio vaccine is part of children's standard set of shots, but Dubey said some parents are opting not to vaccinate their kids and the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed vaccination for others. That's creating a renewed risk of vaccine-preventable diseases as people return to international travel after a two-year break, she said. Global polio vaccination efforts were put on hold for part of that time, compounding the problem.

***Canada expanding funding for HIV screening, including \$8 million for self-testing kits***

Federal Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos announced the government is investing

\$17.9 million to expand HIV testing in Canada, [says The Canadian Press](#). Duclos made the announcement at AIDS 2022, the 24th International AIDS Conference, in Montreal. The federal government says \$8 million will fund the distribution of self-testing kits, adding that the other \$9.9 million will go toward expanding HIV testing in northern, remote, or isolated communities. Ottawa estimates that 63,000 people are living with HIV in Canada and that 1 in 10 remains undiagnosed.

***Valeo Pharma enters into agreement with Kaleo to produce epinephrine auto-injector for Canadian market***

Valeo Pharma said it has entered into a license, supply, and commercialization agreement with Kaleo Inc for the Canadian rights to Allerject – an epinephrine auto-injector for the treatment of serious allergic reactions, [says Proactive Investors](#). Valeo will be responsible for all commercial and medical activities for Allerject in Canada for an initial period of 10 years. Frederic Fasano, Valeo's COO, said the company looks forward to ensuring patient access to this epinephrine auto-injector technology for the emergency treatment of severe anaphylactic reactions which are rare, but potentially life-threatening events. "Allerject is a high quality, high compliance product with user-friendly features, including voice instructions and a retractable needle, ensuring proper use of the device. Its addition to our product portfolio supports Valeo's growth and reinforce our position as a leading Canadian pharmaceutical company," said Fasano.

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## International

***Unclear how the world could meet rising demand for monkeypox vaccine***

Beyond donations from a few high-income countries that have stockpiled the monkeypox vaccine, primarily the US, it remains unclear how the world could meet rising demand for a vaccine following the declaration of a global health emergency, [Health Policy Watch explains](#). Only 16.4 million doses of the monkeypox vaccine made by Bavarian Nordic are available worldwide, and its European manufacturing plant is shut down until the fall of 2022. The US government will be in possession of, or contracted to receive, the overwhelming majority of doses due to be delivered in 2022 — roughly adding up to about 14.4 million doses.

***Epidural shortages impacting pain management worldwide***

Global shortages of epidural catheters and contrast dye used in medical imaging are forcing some health care providers to ration or postpone epidural procedures, which are commonly used to relieve back pain, labor pain and for anesthesia during surgery, [reports Pain News Network](#). At present, most of the catheter shortages are being

reported by hospitals in Canada, with anecdotal reports of shortages in the US. Epidural catheters are thin plastic tubes that are inserted into the lower back by a needle to allow physicians to deliver steroids and other pain medications to the spinal area. Health Canada last week added [Flex-Tip epidural catheterization kits](#) to its list of medical device shortages. The shortage began on July 18 and is expected to continue until the end of the year. Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration [issued an alert](#) last month warning of "temporary supply issues affecting popular brands of epidural kits in overseas markets." "We have anecdotally heard of shortages," a spokesperson for the American Society of Anesthesiologists told PNN when asked about catheter shortages in the US.

### ***US: West Virginia cities reach \$400 million opioid distributor settlement***

West Virginia cities and counties reached a \$400 million settlement with McKesson, AmerisourceBergen and Cardinal Health to resolve the allegations that the 3 wholesalers fueled an opioid crisis in the state, [Reuters says](#). More than 100 local governments had sued the distributors, alleging they recklessly oversupplied West Virginia with prescription pain medication. The settlement ends those lawsuits and builds on previous settlements reached by the companies with the state Attorney General's office. Along with Johnson & Johnson, the distributors previously agreed to a \$26 billion nationwide settlement of opioid litigation, but that settlement did not include West Virginia.

### ***UK: Pharmacists have 'professional responsibility' to ensure medicine sustainability***

New guidance on sustainability risk management added to latest edition of [Medicines Ethics and Practice \(MEP\)](#) reminds pharmacists that they have a "professional responsibility to ensure more sustainable use of medicines," and to help decrease the overall carbon footprint of pharmaceutical care. To help teams put this into practice, it points to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's [4 sustainability policies](#) and advice from the Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union, NHS England and the Carbon Trust. A new section on risk management gives advice on how to conduct an effective risk assessment. Among practical advice, it notes that while "risk management in pharmacy practice is essential as part of effective governance," when taking preventative measures it is important to remember that "you do not always need to eliminate a risk, just reduce it to a reasonable level." The MEP also directs pharmacists for the first time to [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) and [National Services Scotland](#) guidance on provision of needle exchange services for people who inject drugs.

***Researchers suggest ‘home remedies’ to increase vaccine supply in Canada before next pandemic***

COVID-19 has put a spotlight on Canada’s pandemic preparedness and led some experts and leaders to call for a new public agency that would be in charge of domestic vaccine production to increase self-sufficiency. But Paul Grootendorst, an associate professor at the University of Toronto’s Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, says creating such an agency would be more trouble than it’s worth. In a paper titled “[Home Remedies: How Should Canada Acquire Vaccines for the Next Pandemic?](#)” recently published by the CD Howe Institute, Grootendorst and his co-authors explore other ways Canada could boost vaccine production more efficiently ahead of the next pandemic.

***Is a COVID-19 end game still in sight with BA.5 spreading fast? Not with vaccines alone***

The seventh wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing experts to rethink what a victory over the virus will look like. The [Globe and Mail](#) looks at the measures needed to get there and the things that will save vulnerable people along the way.

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**Worth Repeating**

“One of the biggest mistakes we made was expecting vaccines to be a panacea. As a result, we neglected other important public-health measures such as masking, improving ventilation, isolation of the ill, and more.” The *Globe and Mail*’s health columnist [André Picard says](#) that as long as we continue to play down and deny the medical threat of COVID-19—and its effect on the health system, in particular—and embrace the “it’s over” mantra, we will just be “whistling past the graveyards.”

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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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