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Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

July 5, 2023

CPhA

NB pharmacist Carole Goodine named Canadian Pharmacist of the Year

CPhA's 2023 Canadian Pharmacist of the Year is a shining example of how dedication, compassion and perseverance can transform the way health care is delivered. Through her work with seniors in New Brunswick, home to one of Canada's oldest populations, Dr. Carole Goodine sees first-hand how complicated medication regimes can be for patients, especially seniors. A passionate pharmacist and avid researcher, she has devoted her career to simplifying medication management for patients and helping seniors manage their medications. "CPhA is proud to recognize Carole's passion for providing exceptional health care to seniors in New Brunswick," Dr. Shawn Bugden, CPhA's chair, said [in a news release](#). "As Canada's population continues to age, it's exactly this kind of dedication to innovation and to the community that is needed to ensure that Canada's health-care system is meeting the needs of seniors across the country." [Learn more](#) about Carole and CPhA's other 2023 award winners.

Last chance: Survey of IPGs and the pharmacist licensure process in Canada

CPhA is hoping to better understand the experiences of international pharmacy graduates (IPGs) within the Canadian pharmacist licensure process. We've developed a survey intended for IPGs who are either licensed as pharmacists in Canada, going through the licensure process, or no longer planning to become licensed pharmacists in Canada. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. While this is a longer survey, the information we collect will help us identify how we can better support IPGs and work with the pharmacy community to address barriers to licensure. To show our appreciation for your time and input, all IPGs who complete the survey will be entered into a draw to win 1 of 3 cash prizes of \$100 each (excluding residents of Quebec). Take the survey in [English](#) or [French](#) by July 10 at 8 am ET.

Public Service Health Care Plan changes as of July 1: Information for pharmacists

The Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) transitioned to Canada Life on July 1. Over the past several months, CPhA has been advocating to reverse changes to the PSHCP switch as related to dispensing fee caps and frequency limits. The changes are a result of negotiations between the federal government and 17 unions and as such are unlikely to change in the immediate future. Some of the changes will impact pharmacies and may generate questions by plan members at the pharmacy counter. Check out [our resource](#) for updated information, including a link to Canada Life's PSHCP Forms, and some potential speaking points to help you explain the changes to your patients.

Provincial

BC launches centralized appointment portal for patients and prescribing pharmacists

As pharmacists exercise their new prescribing powers, the BC government has launched a new booking system to make it easier for patients to reach them, [Global News reports](#). The portal—the first of its kind in Canada—is similar to the system residents use to book their COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, Health Minister Adrian Dix said. As of June 29, patients can search for available appointment times at pharmacies near them, based on their minor ailment or

contraceptive needs. Walk-in appointments will remain an option at many pharmacies, as will calling ahead to schedule an appointment. BC Pharmacy Association president Chris Chiew said the system will help connect more patients to the health-care system, especially in communities where some services may not be easily accessible. “We’re open after-hours and on weekends so patients can come to see us when and where they need the help,” Chiew said at a press conference.

Program that allows Ontario pharmacists to prescribe some medications ‘tremendously successful’

Six months into a program that allows Ontario pharmacists to prescribe medications for some common ailments, pharmacists say it has been “tremendously successful.” Justin Bates, the president of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA), [told CityNews](#) that the uptake is “really demonstrating how [the program is] helping to fill some of the gaps and create capacity in the health-care system.” With the shortage of family doctors and long wait times at hospitals and walk-in clinics, there is clear demand. OPA said pharmacists have prescribed treatments for almost a quarter of a million people so far, with more than 80% of pharmacies participating. “That’s an incredible number and it’s actually much higher than we thought it was going to be,” Bates said. This fall, 6 more minor ailments will be added to the list of the 13 conditions pharmacists can currently treat, but OPA said Ontario is still behind other provinces that have upwards of 30 conditions included in their minor ailments programs. In particular, OPA is urging the government to add oral contraception to the list.

Critics fear end of COVID-19 rapid test program will create new barriers for some Ontarians

Most Ontario residents will have to pay for COVID-19 testing if infections surge again this fall as expected, and some officials worry that even those who qualify for free testing and treatment could face new barriers as the province ends its free rapid antigen test (RAT) program, [the Ottawa Citizen reports](#). The decision to end the program as of June 30 was made as demand is decreasing and there are lower rates of COVID-19 in the province, plus high vaccination rates among the population, provincial officials said. The end of the RAT program represents a shift to PCR testing at pharmacies, which could create barriers and delays for people, especially for those who qualify for anti-viral treatment for COVID-19, according to the Ontario Pharmacists Association

(OPA). That is especially crucial because there is a narrow window during which Paxlovid—the common anti-viral treatment for COVID-19—is most effective, said Jen Belcher, the vice-president of strategic initiatives and member relations at OPA. “If the patient is approaching the end of their time window for Paxlovid initiation, delays in testing could leave some patients who would otherwise qualify for therapy ineligible due to the requirement that Paxlovid be initiated within 5 days of symptom onset,” she said.

Pharmaprix donates \$3 million to Université de Montréal to help redefine the training and role of pharmacists in Quebec’s health-care system

Pharmaprix has [announced](#) a \$3 million donation to the Faculty of Pharmacy at the Université de Montréal aimed at advancing pharmacy practice in Quebec and supporting the health system as a whole by helping to leverage the expertise of pharmacists. The donation, which will be provided over a 3-year period, will support research related to community-based pharmaceutical practices, advancing health policies and improving patient care. One of the major investments will be the construction of a new pharmacy simulation and virtual reality centre—a cutting-edge laboratory that will provide an immersive training environment, enabling students to cultivate their skills and apply innovative practices in real-world scenarios. “This donation will have a transformative impact on our faculty,” said Simon de Denus, the dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy. “Above all, this gift opens the way for collaboration that will help evolve the role of the pharmacist, because by providing opportunities for research and graduate training to enhance community pharmacy practice, the entire field of pharmacy will emerge transformed.”

National

Sun Life Health introduces new online pharmacy app

Sun Life Health has [introduced](#) the Lumino Health Pharmacy app, provided by Pillway, to offer its clients the convenience of a pharmacist at their fingertips. According to Sun Life, 50% of those prescribed maintenance medications to treat a chronic condition don’t take them properly, which can lead to serious health complications. The app is meant to help Sun Life clients take charge of their health. “Our mission at Pillway is to simplify medication management and empower individuals to live their healthiest lives. With Lumino Health

Pharmacy, we're revolutionizing the way people access and manage their medications, making it quick and easy," said Lak Gill, the CEO of Pillway. "By leveraging technology, we're modernizing the pharmacy experience, and we're thrilled to partner with Sun Life to serve even more Canadians."

International

UK: Pharmacists issue warning as hundreds more pharmacies to close

Pharmacists have said they are at breaking point as the government pushes ahead with plans to increase their workload while hundreds more pharmacies are set to close across England, [iNews reports](#). Boots announced on June 28 it will shut 300 of its stores over the next 12 months. The retailer is not yet releasing details of which specific stores will be affected, but as the majority of its 2200 branches have a pharmacy offering, pharmacists fear it will increase their workload and impact patients. The closures come as the government is working to free up 15 million general practitioner appointments over the next 2 years by handing more responsibility to pharmacists. One of the key elements of the plan is for patients to access prescription medication from pharmacists without seeing their doctor. Leyla Hannbeck, CEO of the Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies, said the pharmacy sector is "absolutely at breaking point," facing major funding shortages. "We're in a situation where we're constantly being asked to do more for less," she said. "Every time a pharmacy closes, more work is landing on other pharmacies without those other pharmacies actually having any more support in terms of managing that situation."

UK: RPS England welcomes NHS long-term workforce plan

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) in England has [welcomed](#) the publication of the [National Health Service \(NHS\) Long-Term Workforce Plan](#), which sets out workforce demand and supply for the next 15 years. The plan covers the whole of pharmacy, following sustained engagement from the RPS and pharmacy leaders, including a joint letter to the Health Secretary in December signed by 14 pharmacy organizations. The workforce plan addresses 3 priority areas of education and training, staff retention, and reforms such as use of technology and delivering more services in the

community. “Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and wider pharmacy teams will be crucial to reducing health inequalities and supporting the health service of the future so that patients can continue to access the medicines and care they need,” said Tase Oputu, the chair of the RPS in England. “Improved workforce planning is fundamental to making this happen by ensuring that we have the staff and skills we need to support patient care.”

Australia: 60-day dispensing guide for pharmacists now available

Ahead of the introduction of 60-day dispensing on September 1, 2023, the Department of Health and Aged Care has launched a “communication kit” targeting pharmacists, [the Australian Journal of Pharmacy reports](#). The [10-page guide](#) is intended to provide information about changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) as a result of the move from 30- to 60-day dispensing of prescriptions, including a section of frequently asked questions and guidance on how to manage medicine supply shortages. It also presents already publicized information on “the background to the changes” and information about “reinvesting funds into pharmacies.” The increased dispensing quantities will initially apply to 92 PBS medicines, with the rest rolled out in stages over a 12-month period.

In Depth

England shifts to single-dose HPV vaccine. Should Canada follow?

England recently announced it will move to a single-dose HPV vaccine, following similar moves in Scotland and Australia. There are calls to do the same in Canada, but some immunologists say there still isn’t enough evidence to show that 1 dose is enough. [CBC’s The National explains](#).

Worth Repeating

“Pharmacists are well-positioned to demonstrate what inclusive care looks like. We are accessible, public-facing health-care providers who can make changes to our day-to-day practice to easily create safe and inclusive spaces for our

patients . . . Small changes like the adoption of patient intake forms with inclusive questions, visible pronouns on name tags and business cards, and integration of sexual health services into practice can speak volumes to patients.” —Greg Richard, the owner of Boyd’s Pharmasave in Halifax, Nova Scotia, [on how pharmacy professionals can support the 2SLGBTQ+ community](#) beyond Pride Month

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.

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