



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

June is National Indigenous History Month

June is [National Indigenous History Month](#) (NIHM)—a time to learn about and celebrate the rich history, cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, while also recognizing the ongoing trauma and harm experienced by Indigenous Peoples and building a path toward reconciliation. Here's an overview of how CPhA and the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada (IPPC) are marking the month:

- **IPPC: A year in review** – Hear from CEO Amy Lamb about the [highlights from IPPC's first year](#) and what's next.
- **Indigenous Pharmacy Scholarship** – [Applications](#) for the 2023/2024 academic year are being accepted until June 15.
- **Pharmacy Check-Ins** – We recently caught up with several Indigenous pharmacy professionals to talk about pharmacy practice and providing safe, inclusive health care to Indigenous communities. Meet [Fanny](#).

[Fiddler](#), [Kalbie Hokanson](#), [Cassandra McLelland](#), [Sasha Merasty](#) and [Jaris Swidrovich](#).

- **Orange shirts for pharmacy professionals** – [Pre-order an “Every Child Matters” shirt](#) designed specifically for pharmacy professionals by July 1 to receive it by September.
- **Updated resource round-up** – Our [Indigenous Health Resource Round-up](#) has been updated with information and resources to help you provide accessible and inclusive care to Indigenous patients.
- **Upcoming webinar on understanding the Indigenous experience** – Join us on Monday, June 19 from 5:00–6:00 pm ET for the first session in CPhA’s new IDEA Dialogues series designed to highlight diverse voices and explore Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Affirmation (IDEAs) in pharmacy. In this session, you’ll hear from a panel of Indigenous pharmacy professionals about their experiences from both sides of the pharmacy counter. [Register now](#).

For more information about NIHM and how you can get involved, check out our [webpage](#) and follow IPPC on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Pride Month: Resources to help you provide safe and inclusive care

Happy Pride Month! Let’s stand together with the 2SLGBTQ+ community every day by providing accessible, gender-affirming and inclusive pharmacy care. Check out our [Resource Round-up](#) for some resources and practice tools to help. Stay tuned for new practice content coming this month!

National survey shows mental health of pharmacy professionals has improved but more support and investments needed to address continued challenges

This week, CPhA shared the results of the 2023 *Pharmacy Mental Health and Workforce Wellness Survey*. Open from February 27 to March 30 and completed by 1136 pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, the survey shows that while the mental health of pharmacy professionals is improving, more work is needed to support the profession. One in 3 rated their mental health and well-being as “good” or “very good” over the past year—an 11-point improvement compared with 2022. Risk of burnout among pharmacy

professionals has also decreased 13 points from 92% in 2022 to 79% in 2023. While an improvement, it shows that workplace exhaustion and disengagement continue to be widespread. CPhA is relieved the results show some improvement for pharmacy professionals since last year, but it's clear that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are still struggling and more supports and investments are needed to address the challenges that continue to impact mental health, wellness and fulfillment within pharmacy. [Explore the survey highlights](#).

Pharmacy Wellness Toolkit: New resources added for pharmacy teams

CPhA's Pharmacy Wellness Task Force is curating a set of evidence-based resources to support wellness within the pharmacy profession. The task force has evaluated the Canadian Health Workforce Network's catalog of 140 wellness interventions and is building a Wellness Toolkit with a selection of curated resources relevant to pharmacy. So far, the toolkit includes resources for individuals and [a new selection of resources for pharmacy teams](#). Over the coming weeks and months, the toolkit will expand to include resources relevant to organizations and system leadership.

Pharmacy on the front lines

How these Indigenous pharmacists are building trust and confronting health care's legacy of systemic racism

When Jaris Swidrovich entered pharmacy school in 2006, he couldn't find another Indigenous person in the program—even in the entire field. "I didn't see myself represented in the profession anywhere. I don't recall ever seeing a—visibly identifiable anyway—Indigenous pharmacist going into a pharmacy. No other pharmacy professors," [he told CBC Radio](#). "I can't think of a single . . . textbook or learning material for pharmacy students that was written by Indigenous people." At the time, there weren't any Indigenous pharmacy-related associations in Canada. So last year, the now full-fledged pharmacist and an assistant professor at the University of Toronto started his own. Swidrovich, a member of the Yellow Quill First Nation, is founder and chair of Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada (IPPC). It was established to help connect Indigenous pharmacy professionals and provide support and information for Indigenous people for pharmacy-related health care in Canada.

IPPC currently counts about 40 Indigenous pharmacists among its membership. Swidrovich says much of the IPPC's work involves advocating for wider recognition of Indigenous medicine, which may have existed for thousands of years, but are often dismissed by Western experts.

This Port Hawkesbury, NS, pharmacy wants you to know you can visit them for primary care instead of waiting in the ER

A Port Hawkesbury pharmacy is now able to offer patients a primary care clinic as part of a provincial pilot project that is looking to increase access to primary care for anyone with a valid Nova Scotia health card. The Medicine Shoppe, owned by Michael Hatt, started seeing patients in a primary care clinic inside the pharmacy on May 1. "Under this pilot, our pharmacy is able to do much more than traditional pharmacies," Hatt [told the Port Hawkesbury Reporter](#). "We're able to bill the Nova Scotia government for all our services, where other pharmacies, some of it remains as a paid-for service." When Hatt went to pharmacy school 20 years ago, he said his teachers would say "someday, you're going to be able to work the full scope of your practice"—something that is ringing true today. "It's a big deal. A lot of our patients would not come to us, even when they needed it, and go wait in the ER for hours on end, just because of that simple fee," he said. "So this is eliminating that barrier."

Provincial

BC pharmacists can now treat minor ailments, prescribe contraception

As of June 1, pharmacists in British Columbia have more responsibilities in an effort to improve access for those without a family doctor and ease the stress on an overburdened health system, [the Canadian Press reports](#). The College of Pharmacists of BC says 75% of eligible community pharmacists have completed the training required to be able to diagnose and prescribe medications for 21 minor ailments like acne, shingles and urinary tract infections, as well as prescribe contraception. Health Minister Adrian Dix said on May 31 that the new services will make it easier and faster for patients to get medication and take the pressure off nurses and doctors who can focus on those with more complex needs. The government estimates more than 750 000 patients will use the services in the first year. These latest powers come after changes last October that allowed pharmacists to administer more

vaccines and renew prescriptions for up to a 2-year period for people whose family doctors have retired or left their practices.

Windsor police team up with pharmacists to help deter robberies

Windsor police are hoping a partnership with local and regional pharmacists will help deter pharmacy robberies and protect pharmacy teams and patients, [CTV News reports](#). The collaborative effort aims to help combat local priority risks and addresses the overall safety and well-being of Windsor's community. Police say partnerships like this are vital in supporting the creation of safer and more secure community spaces. "As pharmacists, our goal is to help our patients gain the greatest possible benefit from the medications we provide. This can only be achieved in an environment where patients, staff, and other members of our community feel safe and secure," said Sebastiano Di Pietro, the president of Essex County Pharmacists Association, and Tim Brady, the chair of the Ontario Pharmacists Association. "Pharmacists in Windsor/Essex are grateful for the strong partnerships we have built with local police services across the region, and we know that we can rely on law enforcement to respond to incidents as they occur."

National

Canadian influenza vaccine guidelines for 2023-24 are now available

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has released the influenza vaccine guidelines for the 2023-24 flu season, [Canadian Healthcare Network reports](#). As in the past, Canadian health-care providers are advised to offer seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as possible after it becomes available in the fall, since seasonal influenza activity may start as early as October in the Northern Hemisphere. NACI recommends offering influenza vaccine annually to anyone 6 months of age or older who does not have a contraindication to the vaccine. Priority should be placed on the groups for whom influenza vaccination is particularly recommended. These include people at high risk of severe disease, influenza-related complications or hospitalization, people capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk, and people who provide essential community services.

Canada facing critical shortages of leukemia and thyroid cancer drugs

Canada is currently facing a critical shortage of 2 drugs—one used to fight thyroid cancer, and another for a form of leukemia, [CTV News reports](#). According to Health Canada, there are currently national shortages of Thyrotropin Alfa, used in the treatment of thyroid cancer, and Asparaginase, also known as Erwinase, which is used to treat a form of leukemia that affects the blood and bone marrow. It is unclear how many patients are affected. “Cancer drug shortages continue to be a serious and growing concern within the Canadian health care system that has been impacting delivery of patient care and treatment for years,” the Canadian Cancer Society said in a statement. “We know that shortages are deeply worrying to people with cancer and their families—it is simply not acceptable to go without the medication you need.” The shortages follow US reports of the unavailability of important chemotherapy drugs like carboplatin and cisplatin, which are used to treat a range of cancer types. Health Canada says both remain available in the country, which has multiple suppliers.

Canada is first to require health warnings printed on individual cigarettes

Canada will soon require health warnings to be printed directly on individual cigarettes, making it the first country to implement this kind of measure aimed at reducing tobacco usage, [CTV News reports](#). Details of the new regulations were announced on May 31, which was World No Tobacco Day. The regulations take effect on August 1 and will be implemented through a phased approach over the next year, the federal government said. “The requirement for a health warning directly on every cigarette is a world precedent setting measure that will reach every person who smokes with every puff,” Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos said in a news release. “This innovative measure will be accompanied by enhanced warnings on the package exterior, and health messages on the package interior that are internationally unique. The new regulations deserve strong support.” As part of the new regulations, the government said it will require labels, written in English and French, on the tipping paper—the outermost paper of the filter section—of individual cigarettes, little cigars, tubes, along with other tobacco products.

US: Walmart is raising wages for some pharmacists in health-care push

Walmart is raising wages for thousands of US pharmacists, the retailer announced on May 31 as part of its broader plan to expand primary care services across the country, [Reuters reports](#). The company said about 3700 pharmacists will get a bump in pay starting on May 31, bringing their total annual average pay to more than US\$140 000 (the equivalent of over CAD\$187 000), excluding bonuses and incentives. The company declined to provide details on their wage rates last year or how it will select the employees for the hikes. Salary rates vary based on location and role, so not all pharmacists will earn the average annual or hourly salary, Walmart spokesperson Nick DeMoss said. The hikes come nearly a year after the company raised wages for 36 000 pharmacy technicians, bumping up their average hourly pay to more than US\$20 (the equivalent of CAD\$26.75). Pharmacy technicians are not part of this announcement, DeMoss said.

In Depth

How to better protect yourself from the health effects of wildfire smoke

As climate change intensifies and prolongs the hot, dry conditions for wildfires to thrive, Canadians can expect more summers of smoky skies. With that smoke comes serious potential health consequences for everyone, including children, older Canadians and people with pre-existing health conditions. [CBC spoke to several health and climate experts](#) who say that with proper planning, those risks can be mitigated. But it requires action before, during and even after the smoke clears.

Climate change is fuelling a spike in Lyme disease cases across Canada

Canadians need to be more vigilant about the rapid growth in Lyme disease cases across the country, as climate change fuels an explosion of tick populations and new hot spots for infection continue to emerge from coast to coast—even in places you may not expect. There have been 17 080 reported cases of Lyme disease across Canada between 2009 and 2022, but while those numbers are likely an underestimate, they have grown dramatically in

recent years according to data from the Public Health Agency of Canada. [CBC explains](#).

Worth Repeating

“We are starting to take our place—not only within our communities, but also in institutions that have to work with our communities, that our communities need to lean on . . . Because that’s part of the infrastructure, the fabric of this country we’re in.” —Dr. Alika Lafontaine, outgoing president of the Canadian Medical Association and the association’s first Indigenous leader, [on how more Indigenous people are making their place in Canada’s health-care system](#), navigating and confronting a legacy of systemic racism in the field

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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