

Subject:

The Weekly: CPhA's Pharmacy News Update for March 9

From: Canadian Pharmacists Association <advocacy@pharmacists.ca>

Sent: March 9, 2022 5:00 PM

Subject: The Weekly: CPhA's Pharmacy News Update for March 9

View in [browser](#) / Afficher dans le navigateur [Web](#)



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

March 9, 2022

CPhA

Webinar recording available: Spotlight on the vital role of pharmacists in harm reduction programs

The opioid crisis is an ongoing and devastating issue across Canada, and pharmacists have a vital role to play in reducing the harm associated with drug and substance use to individuals, families and communities. In this Practice Development webinar from March 2, our panel of experts discuss safer opioid supply programs, review opportunities for interprofessional collaboration and highlight the pharmacist's role as an advocate for patients with addiction. The webinar also features opening remarks from the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Carolyn Bennett. The recording can be viewed [here](#).

CPhA donates to support pharmacy colleagues in Ukraine

Amidst the violence that continues to unfold during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, pharmacies in the country need all the help they can get as they continue to care for their patients and communities under incredibly difficult and dangerous circumstances. The international pharmacy community is rallying to support Ukraine and, in solidarity with our pharmacist colleagues in the country, CPhA made a \$5,000 financial contribution through the International Pharmaceutical

Federation. As of March 9, the BC Pharmacy Association and the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador had also made donations. [Learn more](#) about the global pharmacy response and how you can support Ukraine.

PAM celebrations continue: How you can participate

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.

Pharmacists on the front line

Rotation in ICU gave new perspective on how pharmacy is on the pandemic's front lines

Junaid Faruque had been working in a community pharmacy throughout the pandemic while enrolled in the PharmD for Pharmacists program at U of T's Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy. He had helped to vaccinate people, both in the pharmacy where he worked—which was one of the first pharmacies in the province to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine—and through mass vaccination clinics in Peel Region, [he told U of T News](#). But a rotation in the intensive care unit (ICU) gave him an entirely different view of how pharmacists are helping on the front lines. Faruque started his rotation in the ICU at Kingston Health Sciences Centre in the fall of 2021, right at the beginning of the Omicron wave of the pandemic, when Kingston was being hit particularly hard by the virus. Under the supervision of his preceptor, he worked with patients critically ill with COVID-19, applying the treatment guidelines from Ontario's COVID-19 Science Advisory Table, while also monitoring for the many complications that could occur. "It was a challenging, steep learning curve in a profound environment, but you see the value that pharmacists can bring in a setting that is often not visible to the public," said Faruque, who will graduate from the program this spring. "Critical care units are obviously closed off, but I was able to experience and contribute to this care firsthand."

Provincial

British Columbians 60 and older now eligible for free rapid test kits at pharmacies

British Columbians aged 60 and older can now get free COVID-19 rapid tests from participating pharmacies, [CTV reports](#). The Ministry of Health expanded the eligibility of its pharmacy program on March 7, weeks after other provinces first made the move. There are more than 1000 participating locations across the province. Demand for the tests has been high, with many pharmacies running out of kits. “It’s been going pretty well, there’s been a lot of good uptake on it. A lot of people really do want the rapid tests and I’d say at the majority of pharmacies, they’re really just kind of flying out there for sure,” said Jamie Wigston, president of the BC Pharmacy Association. However, Wigston said he’s hopeful the tests will be restocked this week.

Judge rules licence should be returned to former pharmacist convicted in US probe

A judge has ordered that a Manitoba internet pharmacy pioneer who faced charges in the US involving importing and selling counterfeit drugs be given back his licence to practise pharmacy, [the Winnipeg Free Press reports](#). The Council of the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba cancelled Kristjan Thorkelson’s pharmaceutical licences in November 2019 following his conviction on charges in the US. “The College was not able to point me to any decisions where conduct of a comparable nature, at least in terms of the degree of seriousness, resulted in a pharmacist losing their licence,” Queen’s Bench Justice Colleen Suche wrote in a decision last month. “In fact, looking at the decisions from the College and elsewhere, conduct which arguably is as serious has resulted in nothing more than fines,” Suche said. Thorkelson was 1 of 6 Canadians arrested by US authorities in July 2017 and targeted for extradition in connection to the drug investigation. Thorkelson is the former chief executive officer of now-defunct CanadaDrugs.com. In its heyday, the CanadaDrugs.com Group of Companies, which included UK-based wholesale pharmacy River East Supplies, made up the largest international pharmacy business in the world.

Ontario pharmacists want ability to offer antivirals to patients with COVID-19

Pharmacists across Ontario want the ability to offer antivirals to patients with the virus in a test-to-treat program, [according to CBC](#). Currently, Ontario residents can only access antivirals—medication designed to help the body fight off the SARS-CoV-2 virus, reduce symptoms from an infection and shorten the period of illness—at a provincial testing centre after confirmation of a positive molecular test. At pharmacies across the United States, a test-to-treat program is slated to begin this week. Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association, said the association is in active discussion with the Ministry of Health about bringing this program to Ontario. The federal government purchased 1 million doses of Pfizer’s antiviral medication, Paxlovid, in January and, though changes would need to be made for the program to work in Ontario, some pharmacists want to help. It would simplify the process for patients to access Paxlovid, according to Jen Belcher, pharmacist and owner of Loyalist Pharmacy. “When things are complicated for a patient . . . that reduces the likelihood that they’ll be able to access it,” she said.

National

Physicians who spread misinformation may be eroding trust in health-care system, experts say

A small number of physicians in Canada are spreading misinformation and unscientific views about COVID-19, a trend experts say could undermine the response to the pandemic and erode trust in public officials and institutions, [according to the *Globe and Mail*](#). Medical regulators are under pressure to crack down on physicians and other health professionals who say false or misleading things or prescribe unproven treatments. Experts who study misinformation want to see further measures from colleges to address the growing problem. “I absolutely think the colleges need to do more,” said Timothy Caulfield, Canada research chair in health law and policy at the University of Alberta. “It is the statutory obligation of the colleges to protect the best interests of the public.” Caulfield said evidence shows that most purveyors of misinformation have a strong ideological agenda. And when the misinformation is coming from a trusted source, such as a doctor or scientist, he said, the effects can be “so damaging.” He said physicians and scientists who make false claims are gaining influence because they offer simple answers to complex questions at a time when everyone feels fed up with the pandemic.

Green Shield expands pharmacy focus with the acquisition of NKS Health and The Health Depot

The Green Shield Canada group of companies [has announced](#) 2 key acquisitions in growing segments of the pharmacy landscape. With high-cost specialty drugs continuing to have a major impact on plan sustainability, the group is acquiring NKS Health, an established, innovative specialty pharmacy focused on complex disease management. Since opening its first specialty pharmacy in 2007, NKS Health has become an industry leader with 4 accredited pharmacies, 19 infusion clinics and a national network servicing 30 000 patients per year. The company is also acquiring The Health Depot—an emerging leader in digital pharmacy with expertise in chronic disease management. Aligned with GSC’s track record as an innovator in health and technology, The Health Depot offers a convenient approach that “brings the pharmacy to you” while monitoring medication safety and, when needed, helping to optimize medication therapy.

International

US: New ‘test-to-treat’ initiative recognizes pharmacies, but barriers should be removed

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) is pleased to see US President Biden highlighting the role of pharmacies and pharmacists in announcing the new “test-to-treat” initiative for COVID-19, which includes select pharmacies with on-site health clinics to act as a one-stop shop for patients. “Although we are pleased the administration recognizes the access and care pharmacies provide, we are disappointed that the current plan is narrow and does not enable any willing and able pharmacy to be a ‘test to treat’ pharmacy through this initiative,” APhA said [in a statement](#). “We hope to see this program expand as the supply of COVID-19 oral

antivirals increases, thereby allowing more pharmacies to participate, providing broader access to care.” APhA continues to work with the federal government to reduce barriers that prevent pharmacists from prescribing and being appropriately reimbursed for these products as well as to unleash the power of the nation’s pharmacists to provide this needed care, particularly in underserved communities. [MarketWatch](#) states that CVS, Walgreens Boots and Walmart have indicated they will participate in the initiative.

US: ‘Test-to-treat’ COVID-19 initiative comes under fire from doctors

The Biden administration rolled out a “test-to-treat” [initiative](#) that allows people to get tested for COVID-19 at a local pharmacy and, if positive, to receive antiviral pills on the spot for free. The plan has come under fire from physician groups that don’t like to see physicians bypassed for the sake of convenience. “This approach, though well intentioned in that it attempted to increase access to care for patients without a primary care physician, oversimplifies challenging prescribing decisions by omitting knowledge of a patient’s medical history, the complexity of drug interactions, and managing possible negative reactions,” Gerald Harmon, president of the American Medical Association, said [in a statement](#).

UK: RPS offers Ukrainian health-care professionals free access to medication information

As donations of medicines arrive from charities, non-governmental organizations and the National Health Service to help people in Ukraine gain access to treatments, health professionals using these medicines will need access to reliable information on their use, especially as brand names and information are likely to be different. As a sign of support and to aid in the identification and safe use of medicines, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), through its knowledge business Pharmaceutical Press, has given all health-care professionals in Ukraine [free access](#) to [MedicinesComplete](#) and [the Pharmaceutical Journal](#). This is enabled by the World Health Organization initiative Research4Life. “RPS is keen to play its part in supporting the health professionals working in unimaginable conditions in Ukraine,” says RPS President Claire Anderson. “We recognize that patient care is at risk, with hospitals, pharmacies and health care workers being directly impacted.”

UK: More than half of pharmacists looking to change roles, PDA survey reveals

[According to the website Pharmacy Business](#), more than half of pharmacists working in England are considering changing their roles over the next 12–18 months because of work-related issues, a recent survey by the Pharmacists’ Defence Association revealed. The survey, which concluded on February 18, had more than 2500 participants including employed and locum pharmacists from all 4 UK nations. The initial feedback showed that unsatisfactory pay and working environments, lack of professional fulfilment, and poor management were the key factors for pharmacy professionals to reconsider their current positions. Response from those working in pharmacies owned by Company Chemists’ Association members showed that 54% of them are looking for a change in the next 12 to 18 months, 17% want to become locums and 23% wish to work in another sector. Around 11% are planning to retire, while a shocking 27% intend to leave pharmacy altogether.

UK: Survey finds Scottish public value range of pharmacist services

The vast majority of Scots believe it is important that pharmacists provide services such as referring people to other health services, advising on medicines, and providing advice and services to prevent ill health, [according to a new survey](#) commissioned by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and conducted by Ipsos MORI. Among the findings: 95% of Scottish adults feel it is important that pharmacists refer people to other health services, advise on medicines, and provide advice and services to prevent ill health. This was followed by 89% saying it is important that pharmacists are the first point of contact for common clinical conditions and 87% saying it is important that pharmacists prescribe medicines. Furthermore, 81% feel it is important that pharmacists monitor, review and adjust medicines for long-term conditions such as blood pressure.

Italy: Pharmacists report requests for iodine tablets over nuclear war fears

Pharmacies around Italy have reported a rise in demand for iodine tablets following the escalation of the Russian attack on Ukraine, [according to The Local](#). Newspapers in regions including Veneto, Lombardy and Lazio reported that pharmacies are seeing a sudden demand for iodine tablets, which in some regions can't be purchased without a prescription, and iodine-based supplements. A pharmacist in Rome said he "strongly advised" those who had asked for iodine not to take it unless on the advice of their doctor. "Unfortunately stockpiling harms those who really need the drug for thyroid disease, and can't find it," he told the newspaper *Repubblica*. A pharmacist at Rome's Mariani Pharmacy said that her suppliers were running out of iodine supplements, describing the new demand for them as "completely anomalous." She compared the rush to buy iodine pills to the surge in demand for Amuchina (a disinfectant) and Zitromax (an antibiotic medication) at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, "which, by the way, now that they are back in stock, nobody wants," she said.

In Depth

Mask mandates will soon be lifted in Canada — and could further divide Canadians

Mask mandates will continue lifting across Canada in the coming weeks, leaving people on their own when it comes to whether to pull the polarizing public health tool out of their back pocket to reduce their risk of getting or spreading COVID-19. But as provinces and territories shift to [living with the virus](#) and the true scale of spread in Canada remains uncertain with [testing scaled back dramatically](#), the future of masking will look very different across the country—and it may further divide Canadians. CBC [examines the issue](#).

Worth Repeating

"When you wake up each morning, you're trying to get a hold of your family and see if people are still alive or not." —Pharmacist Nataliya Posudevskya from Airdrie, Alberta, on the [grim reality](#) of having family in Ukraine amidst the war. To help support Ukraine, Posudevskya spearheaded an initiative that has collected more than 200 kg of clothing as well as money donated by the

community through The Medicine Shoppe pharmacy where she works.

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.

Canadian Pharmacists Association
1785 Alta Vista Drive, Ottawa, ON K1G 3Y6

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#)