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Sent: April 28, 2021 5:00 PM
To: Christine Dalglish
Subject: The Weekly: CPhA's COVID-19 Update for April 28



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Latest pharmacy developments in response to COVID-19

April 28, 2021

CPhA

CPhA calls for more collaboration and targeted action to support harder hit regions

Last week CPhA joined calls from the health community for more collaboration across the country to support regions and provinces that are struggling to contain the number of outbreaks and are seeing an alarming increase in cases, hospitalizations and serious illness. [The statement](#) stressed the important role that pharmacies can play in ramping up vaccine distribution, especially in the hardest hit areas. Pharmacists know their communities and can reach those who may be reluctant to get their vaccines or are unable to travel to mass vaccination sites. By allocating the full range of vaccines to pharmacies and other community settings in hot spots, we can increase the number of essential and at-risk workers more quickly and efficiently.

Upcoming webinar: Moving the needle from vaccine hesitancy to vaccine confidence

Vaccine hesitancy (the delay or refusal of vaccination) is one of the most pressing threats to effectively protecting Canadians from COVID-19. It is complex and influenced by multiple factors, including education, confidence, complacency and convenience. As the most accessible health-care professionals, pharmacists have an opportunity to support vaccine uptake by providing patients with evidence-based facts and education in empathetic and respectful ways. Join us on **May 5 from 12-1:30pm ET** to learn about some of the resources, tools, strategies and information you can use to inspire confidence in your patients. [Registration](#) is free and open to all.

New practice tool: COVID-19 Tests in Canada

Testing for COVID-19 supports public health initiatives that are intended to slow the spread of COVID-19 and aids in ongoing vaccination efforts. CPhA has created a new practice tool to help explain approved COVID-19 testing methods in Canada. The tool is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

Pharmacy meets policy: CPhA co-op student gives her take on meeting the Prime Minister

Randilynne Urslak, a second-year University of Waterloo pharmacy student finishing her co-op rotation at CPhA, had the thrill of a lifetime when she joined pharmacists from across Canada to share their experiences administering COVID-19 vaccines in their communities with Prime Minister Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. In [a blog post for the University of Waterloo](#), she wrote, "I know this experience will remain a highlight of my career. COVID-19 has uncovered a lot of cracks in our health system. However, it has also solidified my conviction that pharmacists truly are a crucial part of that system and that we can and do play a vital role in the health and well-being of Canadians."

Updated chart: Pharmacy involvement in COVID-19 vaccination

As COVID-19 vaccination rollouts continue, CPhA is making weekly updates to our Pharmacy Involvement in COVID Vaccination map, staying on top of the role pharmacists are playing in the vaccination effort. The graphic is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

CPhA's COVID-19 web pages are being updated regularly at www.pharmacists.ca/covid19 and www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr.

Provincial

Selected SK pharmacies to begin providing vaccinations this week

Some Saskatchewan pharmacies will begin delivering vaccines to the general public this week, [says the Canadian Press](#). Pharmacies will administer COVID-19 vaccines as part of Phase 2 of the Government of Saskatchewan's Vaccine Delivery Plan. Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan CEO Dawn Martin said that pharmacies across Saskatchewan are ready to go for phase 2. "Our pharmacies have been ready to go for a while. Some of them maybe have been too small for the number of doses going out, but we have close to 390 pharmacies that have registered to provide the vaccine. What's happening this week is the beginning of the process of adding pharmacies to the initiative. This week and the following weeks are really an initial stage to test how this is going to work and how this will roll out with Pfizer, and Pfizer is challenging to distribute because of its need for freezing and then a quick distribution after it thaws," Martin explained.

Some ON pharmacies could administer Pfizer vaccine as part of pilot project

Ontario is seeking to have some pharmacies administer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, as the

province's supply of the AstraZeneca shot remains uncertain, [according to the Canadian Press](#). Health Minister Christine Elliott says the province is working on a pilot project that would deliver the Pfizer shot to "several" pharmacies. She says the government is looking into how to manage the specific storage and transportation requirements for the vaccine, which have so far limited its distribution to hospitals and other such settings. Ontario pharmacies have been administering the AstraZeneca vaccine to those 40 and older and the government said last week it had roughly 337,000 doses left, with no new shipments expected until May. Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association said in an [interview with 680 News](#) that the initial rollout would just be at locations in Toronto and Peel hotspots and that he is hopeful it will be implemented this week. "It would be a very limited rollout for the first 2 weeks," said Bates. "We would roll out from there into other hotspots and then more broadly across the province."

National

Canada on 'solid footing' in negotiations for more AstraZeneca vaccines from US: Anand

Procurement Minister Anita Anand says she is in continuous communication with her American counterparts about securing more doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine manufactured in the US, following an initial loan of 1.5 million. In an [interview with CTV](#) on April 25, Anand said the government is on "solid footing" in the ongoing negotiations. Canada has purchased 20 million AstraZeneca doses that are expected to come from a US plant, but so far none have been shipped. Canada has a contract for 2 million doses from the Serum Institute in India, 500,000 of which have been sent to Canada, with the rest delayed as India deals with a crushing flood in new cases. Canada also has secured access to another 1.9 million from COVAX, a global vaccine sharing network designed to assist mostly middle- to low-income countries. So far, 300,000 of those doses have arrived.

Health Canada updates Johnson & Johnson vaccine product label to mention 'very rare' cases of blood clots

Health Canada has updated the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine product label to include the "very rare" side effect of thrombosis, or blood clotting, following vaccination. However, after conducting a thorough review alongside the manufacturer and other international regulators, Canada's regulatory body has determined that the benefits of the 1-shot vaccine outweigh the [risks of thrombosis](#). "Cases of rare blood clotting events reported in the US after immunization with the Janssen vaccine are similar to those reported after the AstraZeneca vaccine, which Health Canada has communicated about recently," reads a [tweet](#) posted April 26.

Confidence in AstraZeneca jumps amid increased eligibility; trust in Johnson & Johnson tumbles

An extraordinary period in which millennials and Generation Xers became eligible for AstraZeneca doses in several provinces has not only increased Canada's vaccination rate, but also appears to have heightened comfort in the AstraZeneca vaccine itself. [New data](#) from the Angus Reid Institute finds this expansion in eligibility, along with assurances from medical

professionals that the benefits of the vaccine well outweigh the risks, has had a positive impact on public opinion of the vaccine. Among Canadians willing but yet to be vaccinated, 52% now say that they are comfortable receiving AstraZeneca. This represents an 11-point increase in comfort levels in just 2 weeks. The bad news: after a pause of the J&J vaccine in the US due to similar rare side effects, comfort levels with that vaccine brand have dipped 16 points. Canada is expected to begin to offer the J&J vaccine in the [coming weeks](#).

International

US will share AstraZeneca vaccines with world: White House

The US will begin sharing its entire pipeline of vaccines from AstraZeneca once the COVID-19 vaccine clears federal safety reviews, the White House [told the Associated Press](#) on April 26, with as many as 60 million doses expected to be available for export in the coming months. The move greatly expands on the Biden administration's action last month to share about 4 million doses of the vaccine with Mexico and Canada. The AstraZeneca vaccine is widely in use around the world but not yet authorized by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The move comes as the White House is increasingly assured about the supply of the 3 vaccines being administered in the US, particularly following the restart of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson shot over the weekend.

Millions of Americans aren't receiving second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine: CDC

Millions of Americans are not receiving the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and [reported by Business Insider](#). Nearly 8% of the people who've received their first dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines – 5 million people — have missed their follow-up appointments to receive the second dose. There are several reasons a growing number of Americans might not want to receive the second dose. Some might fear experiencing side effects, while others might feel like 1 dose should be enough protection against the virus. Others had their second appointments cancelled because vaccination sites ran out of doses.

Pharmacy on the front line

Inside the fast-paced world of pharmacies racing to vaccinate Albertans

Across Alberta, pharmacists are vaccinating as many residents as possible as quickly as they can. Katrina Wilson-Kubota and Heather Snook co-own a pharmacy in Spruce Grove, which began getting COVID-19 vaccine shipments earlier this month, [according to Global News](#). The duo said they have been fielding constant phone calls, administering vaccinations while handling regular pharmacy duties. "It's definitely different. It's busy. People always calling and asking to be put on a wait list, asking what vaccine we have," Snook said. As a pharmacist for more than 15 years, Wilson-Kubota said she has also acted as a force against vaccine misinformation. "I know people were nervous. But, one of the things that's really important to me is to educate myself and then educate my patients about what I've learned," she said.

In-depth

Canadians should ask why we are running out of drugs to treat COVID-19

In the midst of Canada's third COVID-19 wave, hospitals are becoming overwhelmed. Preventing disease through public health measures and vaccination remains the mainstay of our country's response. Yet Canadians are still catching COVID-19, so making sure that patients who are sick enough to be hospitalized get the best possible treatment remains incredibly important. There have been hundreds of clinical trials internationally that have told us what does and does not work for this horrible disease. We know a lot more about how to treat COVID-19 than we did a year ago. But in Canada, we are about to run out of some of the most effective treatments, [says the *Globe and Mail*](#).

Worth repeating

"I'm tired. But I'm happy I'm tired. We are all living history. I am so happy and proud to be a pharmacy that offers the COVID-19 vaccine." — Heather Snook, pharmacy technician and co-owner of a pharmacy in Spruce Grove, AB, [on pharmacy life](#) during COVID-19.

This weekly COVID-19 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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