

**From:** Public & Professional Affairs Department  
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**August 12, 2020**

## **CPhA**

### ***Canadians, pharmacists share concerns about flu immunizations***

Canadians say they are [more likely to get immunized against the flu](#) this year because of COVID-19, according to a [national survey of 1912 Canadians](#) conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights. However, they are worried about their safety and how health care providers are going to manage physical distancing requirements, personal protective equipment (PPE) supply and use, and limits on the number of people allowed in a health care setting at one time. Pharmacists, who administered 3.2 million influenza immunizations in 2018-19, share many of the same concerns as the public as they gear up for flu season, according to a [national survey of 1201 pharmacists](#) conducted by CPhA. Specifically, pharmacists are concerned or very concerned about ensuring that a supply of disposable masks is available to patients if they don't have one (79%); ensuring PPE is available for them and their staff (77%); and additional costs associated with additional cleaning measures, PPE, etc. (66%).

### ***CPhA Flu Working Group provides pharmacy perspective to PHAC flu guidance document***

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has released its [Guidance for Influenza Vaccine Delivery in the Presence of COVID-19](#). The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the delivery of seasonal influenza vaccine in fall 2020, when ongoing COVID-19 activity may continue to stress public health capacity and affect clinic operations and attendance. CPhA's national Flu Working Group provided a pharmacy perspective that has been reflected in the document, which will form the foundation for the CPhA-suggested operational best practices document currently in development.

### ***New COVID Conversations recording now available***

The webinar recording for the July 29 edition of COVID Conversations, Virtual Care – Will It Transform Pharmacy Practice? Is now [available on our website](#). During this webinar, host Shelita Dattani and pharmacy experts discuss their experiences with providing care digitally and the evolution of the profession through virtual care. Panellists are Alison Bodnar, CEO of Nova Scotia Pharmacists; Sammu Dhaliwall, Business Development Manager at NorthWest Telepharmacy Solutions; Sean Simpson, Pharmacy Owner of Simpson's Pharmacy; and Tara Maltman-Just, Founder & Executive Clinician of Vitality Integrative Medicine.

CPhA's COVID-19 web pages are being updated regularly at [www.pharmacists.ca/covid19](http://www.pharmacists.ca/covid19) and [www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr](http://www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr).

## **Provincial**

### ***How Manitoba is gearing up for flu season amid the pandemic***

The Manitoba government is expecting the demand for the flu vaccine to increase this year, says [CTV Manitoba](#). With this expectation, the Progressive Conservatives are doubling the order for the high-dose influenza vaccine. In 2019, the province ordered 11,500 high-dose vaccines and it plans to order 21,500 for this influenza season. Cameron Friesen, Minister of Health, Seniors, and Active Living, says, "By doubling our order of high-dose influenza vaccine and making it available to more people at

high risk of contracting the flu, we are able to protect them, as well as our health-care providers on the front line.” Pharmacies, physicians, and other providers will be allowed to place their orders starting on Aug. 17, and orders are expected to arrive in late September.

## National

### ***CDSA exemptions extended to September 2021***

Health Canada is extending the [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act \(CDSA\) Section 56\(1\) class exemption](#) for patients, practitioners and pharmacists prescribing and providing controlled substances in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic until September 30, 2021. Earlier this summer, CPhA met with the Office of Controlled Substance to push for an extension. We will continue to call for these exemptions to the CDSA to be made permanent, along with the expansion and harmonization of other services to advance pharmacists’ role as opioid stewards, such as adapting prescriptions.

### ***Feds sign agreements with Pfizer, Moderna for millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines***

The federal government has [entered 2 agreements](#) to secure millions of doses of potential COVID-19 vaccines. Public Services and Procurement Minister Anita Anand says Ottawa has signed deals with the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and biotechnology firm Moderna. Pfizer will supply its BNT162 mRNA-based vaccine candidate, while Moderna will provide its mRNA-1273 vaccine candidate. “These vaccine candidates are very promising and we all look forward to the day when restrictions can be lifted entirely,” Anand said Wednesday during a news conference along with Innovation, Science and Industry Minister Navdeep Bains.

### ***Vaccine Task Force announced***

The federal government [announced its COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force](#), which is advising the government on how best to support vaccine research in Canada. The Vaccine Task Force includes vaccine and immunology experts, as well as industry leaders with a proven ability in developing and commercializing vaccines. The co-chairs are Joanne Langley, Head of Infectious Diseases at the IWK Health Centre in Halifax and Professor in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology at Dalhousie University, and J. Mark Lievonen, former President of Sanofi Pasteur Limited in Canada.

### ***Multiple vaccine candidates needed to safeguard against possible failures***

A co-chair of Canada's new COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force says it will be critical to have a number of vaccine candidates on hand to halt the spread of COVID-19 should any of the country's leading options fail, [CBC reports](#) “The vaccine task force strategy is to develop — and we have developed — a portfolio of vaccines,” said Dr. Joanne Langley, head of infectious diseases at Halifax's IWK Health Centre. “The announcement that you heard this week was for 2 vaccines, but in fact we’ve been recommending a suite of vaccines across a number of platforms and negotiations about those vaccines are underway.”

### ***Safety won't be compromised for vaccine, Canada's top doctors say***

Canada will not cut corners to get a vaccine candidate for COVID-19 approved, the country’s chief public health officer said yesterday, the [Canadian Press](#) reports. As news emerged that Russia had approved the world’s first such vaccine, Dr. Theresa Tam said she is as anxious as anyone for a safe and effective vaccine to be ready, but that getting one quickly doesn’t mean compromising safety. Getting this done in record time is no easy feat, as we must ensure any vaccine demonstrates the highest standard of safety and effectiveness,” Dr. Tam said at a media briefing in Ottawa. “There are many steps and partners across research, government and industry required to produce and deliver a safe and effective vaccine. All steps and partners are crucial. Nothing gets cut.”

## International

### ***Patients groups urge action for pharmacies to ramp up patient access to COVID-19 testing***

More than 20 groups representing patients, consumers, the medically underserved, public health, and diverse health care providers are [asking Congress to take action](#) necessary for more pharmacies to ramp up patients’ access to COVID-19 testing

and to help prevent delays in giving vaccines when they become available. Despite being authorized to order and administer COVID-19 tests, pharmacists still have no reliable way to be paid for these services. This effectively excludes too many Americans from ready access to testing programs that could be implemented by nearby and trusted pharmacists. Formally designating pharmacists as “providers” under Medicare will fix this problem – and prevent a similar problem that threatens vaccine deployment.

### ***Pharmacies have an important role in this pandemic – but they need help to continue saving lives***

In a commentary in London's [Telegraph](#) Jacqueline Doyle-Price, Conservative MP and a former health minister, says the pandemic is a reminder that pharmacies are the first port of call for many patients and a fundamental part of the NHS family. She says, “If we are going to unleash the value of community pharmacies and use them more effectively as part of the NHS, we need to make sure we are giving them the right support. We need to work with the sector to enable new ways of working and invest in new models of care. But we also need to make sure that funding works in a way that sustains these businesses and maximises the role they can play in delivering national health services.”

### ***Russia approves COVID-19 vaccine before final trials***

President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that Russia had become the first country in the world to grant regulatory approval to a COVID-19 vaccine after less than 2 months of human testing, a move hailed by Moscow as evidence of its scientific prowess, [Reuters reports](#). The vaccine still has to complete final trials, raising concerns among some experts at the speed of its approval, but the Russian business conglomerate Sistema has said it expects to put it into mass production by the end of the year.

### ***J&J eyes 1 billion doses of potential COVID-19 shot in 2021***

Johnson & Johnson could produce 1 billion doses of its potential COVID-19 vaccine next year if it proves successful and would consider injecting healthy volunteers with the coronavirus if there are not enough patients for final trials, [Reuters writes](#). Last month, J&J began early-stage human safety trials after releasing details of a study in monkeys that showed its best-performing candidate offered strong protection in a single dose. Large-scale trials are set to start by October, and J&J aims to have efficacy results between the end of this year and mid-2021.

### ***Health secretary Alex Azar expects US vaccine by December***

US Health Secretary, Alex Azar says that America hopes to have a COVID-19 vaccine approved by December and tamped down Russia’s celebrations over unveiling its own vaccine after rapid development, writes [The Guardian](#). “The point is not to be first,” Azar says. “The point is to have a vaccine that is safe and effective for the American people and the people of the world.” Russia approved a COVID-19 vaccine for widespread use after less than 2 months of human testing, including a dose administered to one of Vladimir Putin’s daughters.

### ***Antibody drugs could be one of the best weapons against COVID-19. But will they matter?***

From the moment COVID-19 emerged as a threat, one approach to making drugs to treat or prevent the disease seemed to hold the most promise: They’re known as monoclonal antibodies. Now, scientists are on the brink of getting important data that may indicate whether these desperately needed therapies could be safe and effective, [reports STAT](#). Clinical trials involving a pair of antibodies developed by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals will read out early results in September. A separate effort from Eli Lilly could yield data later in the fall.

### ***Americans are dying after drinking hand sanitizer, CDC says***

People are getting sick and even dying after swallowing hand sanitizer, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says. Four have died and others have suffered impaired vision or seizures, the CDC says. Hand sanitizer is everywhere and is useful for cleaning the hands during the coronavirus pandemic. But it’s not safe to swallow, the CDC cautions. “Alcohol-based hand sanitizer products should never be ingested,” the CDC said in [a new report](#). A CDC team described the cases of 15 adults in Arizona and New Mexico hospitalized for methanol poisoning after consuming alcohol-based hand sanitizers between May and June of this year.

## **Newsworthy**

### ***Winter is coming: Why America's window of opportunity to beat back COVID-19 is closing***

The good news: The United States has a window of opportunity to beat back COVID-19 before things get much, much worse. The bad news: That window is rapidly closing. And the country seems unwilling or unable to seize the moment, [STAT reports](#).

## **Worth Repeating**

“COVID-19 is not going away...We are going to be living with this virus for some time.” - Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, commenting as Alberta COVID-19 cases creep up to over 100 a day.

This weekly COVID-19 update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. To unsubscribe, please reply to this email with “Unsubscribe” in the subject line.

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