



Canadian  
Pharmacists  
Association  
Association des  
pharmaciens  
du Canada

# The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

**August 18, 2021**

## **CPhA**

***More than 2000 pharmacies ready to provide rapid COVID-19 tests to small and medium employers in AB, SK, MB and ON***

CPhA has been working with Health Canada and its partners in the pharmacy community to make rapid test kits available in pharmacies for workplace testing by small and medium-sized enterprises, [according to a news release](#). Increasing access to these tests is an important step in Canada's COVID-19 screening and recovery strategy and pharmacists are ideally positioned to aid with distribution. Over the past several weeks, well over 2000 pharmacies in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario have signed up to be part of this federal initiative. In doing so, pharmacies are supporting employers in keeping employees and customers safe and helping to reopen the economy. As part of the program, small and medium-sized enterprises can sign up on [the Government of Canada portal](#) and view a list of participating pharmacies in their communities. CPhA has created a [resource page \(en français\)](#) with more information and additional training resources and looks forward to expanding the program to other provinces.

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## **Pharmacy on the front line**

***Take your shot and embrace a fresh start, safely***

Since COVID-19 vaccinations were made available in Alberta, many students have been helping to administer vaccines within the University of Alberta community and beyond. [YouAlberta](#) spoke to 4 students—3 of whom are pharmacy students—who say they feel proud to have participated

in these life-saving efforts.

### ***Pharmacy preps for International Overdose Awareness Day***

Marcel Laporte, a Sarnia, ON pharmacist, and his staff at BMC Pharmacy are helping people suffering from overdoses in locations that range from busy city parking lots to farms in rural Lambton County, [the Sarnia Observer reports](#). “This affects everyone’s neighbourhood. You don’t have to look very far to find someone who’s been affected by it,” Laporte says. To mark International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, the pharmacy will be hosting its annual community event to distribute free naloxone kits with the goal of getting as many of the life-saving kits into the homes of people who use opioids. The pharmacy typically hands out between 100 and 150 kits during the event, Laporte says. “If someone has a bee allergy, you make sure you have an EpiPen on hand. And if someone is taking opioids, whether it be illicit or otherwise, the responsible thing to do is to have [a naloxone kit] on hand as well,” he says.

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## **Provincial**

### ***NB: More pharmacy vaccines could allow doctors to take on thousands of new patients, researcher says***

New Brunswick could save big money—and a lot of physicians’ time—by allowing pharmacists to administer a wider variety of vaccines, according to a research project conducted by the New Brunswick Institute for Research Data and Training at the University of New Brunswick, [CBC reports](#). Adding just 2 more vaccines to the list of vaccines administered by pharmacists would save \$1.5 million a year says Chris Folkins, the study’s lead researcher. Allowing pharmacists to administer 2 common vaccines—tetanus and pneumonia—could save doctors more than 2000 hours a year and allow them to take on nearly 3000 new patients. Jake Reid, the executive director of the New Brunswick Pharmacists Association, says his members are willing to take on more responsibility. He says the COVID-19 vaccine program, which saw more than 40% of all COVID-19 vaccines administered by pharmacists, proves that pharmacists can deliver vaccinations on a wide scale. The research project “reinforces a lot of what we’ve been saying as an association,” Reid says, noting there are a lot of services that pharmacists are qualified to perform that are currently being carried out by doctors and nurses.

### ***Manitoba experiencing shortage of naloxone***

[According to CTV](#), advocates in Manitoba are sounding the alarm about a shortage of naloxone—a critical tool in the fight against overdoses. Overdose Awareness Manitoba says the life-saving medicine that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose is in short supply in Manitoba. Arlene Last-Kolb, a co-founder of the advocacy group, says naloxone is regularly used to prevent people from an overdose, but that the province’s take-home program isn’t keeping up with recent demand. A provincial spokesperson confirmed there has been a brief supply issue and a short-term wait for some orders, but said the issue will be addressed with stock in the next few weeks.

### ***ON to offer third dose of COVID-19 vaccine to select vulnerable populations***

Ontario will begin offering a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to individuals most at risk of serious illness, [CTV reports](#). On August 17, the province released a list of vulnerable populations eligible for the third shot, including transplant recipients, patients with hematological cancers, recipients of an anti-CD20 agent and residents of high-risk settings such as long-term care homes, retirement homes and First Nations elder care lodges. Anne Génier, senior media relations adviser for Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), [told the Globe and Mail](#) that the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) continues to closely monitor evidence on the potential need or benefit of a third dose in immunosuppressed people, but say they're waiting for more data before authorizing it. In Canada, provinces can authorize third doses independently from the federal government. Quebec's Health Department made extra shots of mRNA vaccines available in July to residents who had received a mix of COVID-19 vaccines, because some countries did not recognize them as being fully immunized, and Saskatchewan [announced a similar policy](#) on August 17.

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## National

### ***Walmart Canada hosts first-ever "Vax-a-thon"***

Walmart is [hosting its first-ever "Vax-a-thon"](#) on August 19—a 1-day vaccine blitz at more than 250 pharmacies from coast to coast. Pharmacists will set up at the front of stores to speak with customers and educate them about the effectiveness and safety of COVID-19 vaccines. Customers who would like to receive a COVID-19 vaccine during the event can do so on-the-spot in participating pharmacies. To date, Walmart pharmacists have administered more than 375,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses across Canada.

### ***Shoppers Drug Mart provides funding to support research to better understand and address vaccine hesitancy***

In a [news release](#), Shoppers Drug Mart (SDM) announced funding in support of 19 to Zero's ongoing efforts to understand and address vaccine hesitancy in Canada. Launched at the University of Calgary in August 2020, 19 to Zero is a not-for-profit coalition of doctors, scientists, academics and others, working together to understand, engage with and ultimately shift public perceptions around COVID-19 behaviours and vaccine. The funding from SDM will support the coalition's efforts to understand fundamental sources of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in specialized or low confidence populations and deliver COVID-19 vaccine education to targeted patient populations.

### ***Canada secures more COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna in new agreement***

The federal government has reached an agreement with Moderna for additional supply of COVID-19 vaccines until 2024, [Global News reports](#). The agreement secures Canada's access to 40 million doses of the mRNA vaccine, with the option to purchase an additional 65 million shots. "We've reached an agreement with Moderna for additional supply of its COVID-19 vaccine for 2022 and 2023, with an option to extend into 2024," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted

on August 14. The announcement comes several days after the Massachusetts-based drug maker [confirmed it had signed a memorandum of understanding with the federal government](#) to build an mRNA vaccine manufacturing plant in Canada.

### ***Canada to require vaccination for air, rail and marine travellers as well as federal employees***

Canada will soon require many travellers on domestic planes, trains and cruise ships to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, the federal government announced on August 13. [According to the Globe and Mail](#), Ottawa will also make vaccination mandatory for federal public servants, and said it expects employers in federally regulated industries and Crown corporations to do the same. Close to half a million people work directly for the federal government, a Crown corporation, the military or the RCMP. Nearly a million more work in federally regulated industries, which includes banks and airlines.

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## **International**

### ***Ireland: Over 700 pharmacies administering Pfizer vaccines***

The number of community pharmacies administering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine doubled to more than 700 nationwide, [according to TheJournal.ie](#). Since June, when Health Minister Stephen Donnelly announced the expansion of the vaccination program to pharmacies, community pharmacists have administered close to 200,000 vaccines. Some 320 pharmacies had been administering Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, among almost 1000 pharmacies who have also been offering the Johnson & Johnston vaccine. Over 700 pharmacies had originally indicated their availability to administer the Pfizer-BioNTech jabs, according to the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU), and will now receive stock to begin vaccinations. The IPU said it is anticipated that the Pfizer vaccine will now continue as the mainstay of the pharmacy-based campaign against the virus.

### ***US: FDA authorizes additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine for the immunocompromised***

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the administration of an additional dose of a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for people who have certain immunocompromising conditions amid growing evidence that they do not get adequate protection from the normal 2-dose regimen of the mRNA vaccines, [STAT reports](#). The decision was formally an amendment to the emergency authorization under which the mRNA vaccines are already being used. Several countries—France, Germany, Britain, and Israel among them—are or will soon be giving third doses to immunocompromised people.

### ***US: Roche warns of global Actemra shortage as delta variant drives huge spike in demand for COVID-19 patients***

Less than 2 months after the FDA authorized emergency use of the arthritis drug Actemra for critically ill COVID-19 patients, Roche [disclosed in a statement](#) that global shortages will exist over the coming weeks and months. The drug maker cited an "unprecedented surge in

worldwide demand," with US demand spiking well beyond 400% of what was seen prior to the pandemic. Much of the clamor in the US occurred in the past 2 weeks alone.

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## In-Depth

### ***Who are the vaccine hesitant and how do we reach them?***

Since vaccines against COVID-19 first came into view last fall, the team at Abacus Data has been studying public opinion about getting vaccinated. Based on an adult population of 29.5 million in Canada, their latest results show 7% or 2.1 million adults are vaccine hesitant, and the same number are outright refusing a COVID-19 vaccination. [An article in MacLean's](#) looks at how increasing vaccine acceptance starts by acknowledging that the hesitant and refusers share some similarities, but in other respects are quite different.

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## Worth Repeating

"There can be no comparisons made between the state-sponsored mass murder of 6 million Jews and the temporary shutdown of the local mall." — the *Globe and Mail's* André Picard [looks at the troubling Nazi-fication](#) of COVID-19 discourse.

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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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