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CPhA

Pharmacy Appreciation Virtual Town Hall

The Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, would like to take the opportunity to thank the pharmacy community for the incredible work that pharmacists and pharmacy staff have undertaken throughout the pandemic, particularly during this year's extraordinary flu season. We invite all pharmacy staff to join us on **Wednesday, December 16 at 4:00pm ET** when the minister will be joined by Chief Public Health Officer Theresa Tam and MP for Kitchener Centre and pharmacist Raj Saini, to highlight these critical efforts and to answer some questions from the community. [Registration is free and is now open.](#)

Pharmacy's pandemic response: Reflections on future pandemic planning

On **Thursday, December 17, from 3:00-4:30pm ET**, join our panel of experts for the final session of CPhA's Virtually Together webinar series, [Pharmacy's pandemic response: Reflections on future pandemic planning](#). Canada's most accessible health care providers, pharmacists, kept their doors open and continued to provide essential medication management care to Canadians while other providers closed. This session will highlight some of the challenges the community has faced throughout the pandemic and some of the key strategies and considerations in achieving patient continuity of care, safeguarding medication supply and optimizing workflow to protect staff and patients. It is essential to incorporate early lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to help pharmacists be better prepared for the future. This session is free and is accredited for 1.5 CEUs. [Registration is now open.](#)

CPhA calls for clarity in rollout of COVID-19 vaccine

CPhA has [called for a coordinated strategy](#) to ensure health care professionals are ready to administer vaccines once they arrive in Canada, [reports PharmacyU](#). The association is also calling for a federal commitment to provide the necessary funding and resources to assist provinces and territories cover the costs associated with the administration of vaccines by health professionals. "Pharmacists are ready and willing to help vaccinate Canadians against COVID-19, and similar to flu campaigns, we know that pharmacies remain the preferred location for Canadians to get vaccinated," says Christina Tulk, chair, CPhA. "What we need now is some direction from governments on how and when vaccines will be distributed so that pharmacies can start planning."

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

Provincial

Feds and provinces ready to rollout COVID-19 vaccines

Canada is getting ready to take on the monumental job of distributing the COVID-19 vaccine, starting with the most vulnerable, [says Canadian Healthcare Network](#) (subscriber access required). Ontario expects to be ready to receive the vaccine by December 31, 2020, and the first doses are likely to be available in 2021. Members of the province's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force, which will prepare to make the vaccines available to Ontario residents as soon as possible, were announced on December 4, with Gen. Rick Hillier leading the group made up of medical, information technology and logistics experts. Joining their ranks is one pharmacist, Dr. Regis Vaillancourt, director of pharmacy and pain services at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. "I'm confident that pharmacy will be part of the community providers in terms of distribution and administering the COVID vaccine," said Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA). "We are advocating for pharmacists to be prioritized along with other healthcare providers to be receiving the first round of the vaccine."

NS pharmacists "eager" to play role in COVID-19 vaccine administration

Nova Scotia will be ready to start administering COVID-19 vaccines to a select group as soon as the vaccine is delivered, but it will be several months into 2021 before a widespread immunization program begins, [according to CBC](#). Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia's chief medical officer of health, said even though the National Advisory Committee on Immunization has [released recommendations](#), it will be up to provincial authorities to create more precise rollout plans for those high-risk groups. Pharmacies have played a major role in influenza vaccine distribution in recent years, and Amy Wagg of the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia (PANS) said pharmacists are "eager" to extend that to COVID-19 vaccination — they're just waiting for direction. Strang said Friday that conversations with doctors and pharmacists will start in the new year. Pharmacists' readiness, Wagg said via email, will depend on the province's planning, including whether it provides supplies like syringes and how it manages cold storage.

National

Health Canada approves Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

On December 9 Health Canada regulators announced that they have given the green light to Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, a key step toward launching the biggest inoculation program in Canada's history, [says the CBC](#). On December 7, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that several hundred thousand doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine will be available in Canada before the end of the year — shots primarily earmarked for long-term care home residents and the staff working there. Trudeau said up to 249,000 doses of the 2-dose vaccine will be on hand by year's end to launch a mass inoculation campaign, which is expected to take many months to complete.

PHAC launches COVID-19 Vaccine Foundations for Health Care Providers webinar

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is hosting a free, open-access webinar to provide Canadian health care providers to increase knowledge and confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines. With opening remarks by Dr. Howard Njoo, Deputy Chief Public Health Officer, the program features 3 modules, each with a moderated/live question and answer session. [COVID-19: Vaccine Foundations for Health Care Providers](#) will take place in English ([register here](#)) on Monday, December 14 from 1-3pm ET. The session will also be delivered in French, [Fondements sur les vaccins contre la COVID-19 à l'intention des fournisseurs de soins](#), on Tuesday, December 15 from 1-3pm ET ([register here](#)).

Canada to get first Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine doses before end of December

Canada's first vaccinations against COVID-19 could begin happening as early as next week, [reports CTV](#). Canada will be receiving an initial batch of up to 249,000 doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine before the end of December, with the first shipment expected next week. This means people could begin receiving vaccinations, on a priority basis, very soon after. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [made the announcement](#) December 7, alongside Public Services and Procurement Minister Anita Anand, Deputy Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Howard Njoo and Maj.-Gen. Dany Fortin.

First Pfizer vaccine shots to be given right at delivery sites, not LTC homes: Tam

Canada's chief public health officer says the first doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine are likely to be given only to people who can physically be at one of the 14 delivery sites identified by provincial governments for the first arrivals of the vaccine, [says CTV](#). Dr. Theresa Tam said at a briefing on December 8 that it is a "rapidly evolving situation," but acknowledged this will make it difficult to get long-term care residents vaccinated first. "It's true you cannot move residents very easily from a long-term care centre to a vaccine site," she said. "That's just the reality."

Vaccine chief anticipating 'constant flow of vaccines' into Canada once approved

The top military general leading the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine is anticipating a "constant flow" of doses into the country. "What we expect to see in January is constant flow of vaccines that come in, Pfizer and others as well, as they become available. So, they will be distributed, and then the next wave comes in... next delivery comes in for the second dose, in a prescribed timeframe," said Maj.-Gen. Dany Fortin, who is the vice president of logistics and operations within the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). In an [interview on CTV](#), Fortin said that his plans are centred around the expectation of receiving doses "early in the new year."

Majority of Canadians want feds to make the call on mandatory COVID-19 vaccine: survey

As provincial leaders decide whether a COVID-19 vaccine should or should not be mandatory, a new poll suggests Canadians want the federal government to make that call, [says CTV](#). Over half (57%) of Canadians polled by Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies said that they felt the federal government should make the call to determine whether a potential vaccine is mandatory or not. Alberta and the Atlantic provinces felt most strongly (59%), while 54% of Quebecers felt the feds should make the call. At the same time, 55% of those surveyed felt the vaccine should be voluntary, 17% said they would not take the vaccine and 41% said it should be mandatory.

International

Pharmacies need to be an essential part of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has [said its members are available](#) to support the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign and called on the COVID-19 Vaccine Taskforce to avail of this potential health care solution. IPU Secretary General Darragh O'Loughlin said that after many months of heavy restrictions, the government owes it to everyone to rollout the vaccine as quickly and seamlessly as possible and that while a safe and effective vaccine could arrive within weeks, it will still take time and meticulous planning to ensure a comprehensive vaccination program is rolled out. "Pharmacists have the training and experience to play a prominent role in the vaccination campaign. Over the past decade, pharmacists have safely administered hundreds of thousands of flu vaccines in Ireland. Pharmacists have the capacity to administer a minimum of 10,000 COVID vaccines per day across the country, which would be an enormous asset to the vaccination program," he said.

CVS, Walgreens seek pharmacists on the eve of vaccination rush

CVS and Walgreens are aggressively recruiting pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and nurses to administer COVID-19 vaccines in long-term care facilities, just days before the drugstore giants are expected to play a key role in a large immunization effort, [reports Bloomberg](#). Representatives from the 2 companies are making in-person and virtual pitches to independent pharmacists, according to National Community Pharmacists Association Chief Executive Officer Douglas Hoey. The outreach has surprised the group's members because it suggests the chains don't have enough people to run the massive effort, he said.

Pharmapod developing app to help vaccine rollout

Irish software company Pharmapod is developing an application designed to assist in the management of the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines globally, [reports RTE](#). Pharmapod is working in conjunction with the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) on the cloud-based solution, which is now in its final stages. The system will work, Pharmapod claims, by streamlining the process of administering the vaccine. It will enable patients to book their vaccination appointment and provide real-time information to health care professionals and their organisations, as well as businesses and public health bodies. Pharmapod is

hoping to have this system up and running to coincide with the rollout of vaccine programs internationally.

10 things pharmacists should know about COVID-19 vaccines

Work towards a COVID-19 vaccine is progressing rapidly, and new information is emerging every day. The [Pharmaceutical Journal summarizes](#) the most important details of COVID-19 vaccine development from a pharmacy perspective.

Pfizer tells US officials it cannot supply substantial additional COVID-19 vaccine until late June or July

Pfizer told the Trump administration it cannot provide additional doses of its COVID-19 vaccine until late June or early July because other countries have rushed to buy up its supply, [the Washington Post reports](#). This means the US government will have 100 million doses of the 2-shot Pfizer vaccine purchased earlier this year — far fewer than it initially planned — raising questions about whether it can keep to its aggressive schedule to vaccinate most Americans by late spring or early summer.

UK trial to mix and match COVID vaccines to try to improve potency

A trial is likely to go ahead in January to find out whether mixing and matching COVID-19 vaccines gives better protection than 2 doses of the same one, [says the Guardian](#). The news comes as the [first British patients began receiving coronavirus vaccinations](#) on December 7, a vaccine made by Pfizer/BioNTech, a week after the UK became the first country in the Western world [to approve a COVID vaccine](#). Those who take part in January's trial will get 1 shot of AstraZeneca's vaccine and 1 of the Pfizer injection. A vaccine from US biotech firm Moderna will also be included if it gets approval.

Majority in poor nations to miss out on inoculation as West buys up COVID-19 vaccines

Nine out of 10 people in 70 low-income countries are unlikely to be vaccinated against COVID-19 next year because the majority of the most promising vaccines coming on-stream have been bought up by the West, campaigners have said, [reports the Guardian](#). As the first people get [vaccinated in the UK](#), the People's Vaccine Alliance is warning that deals made by rich countries' governments will leave the poor at the mercy of the virus. Rich countries with 14% of the world's population have secured 53% of the most promising vaccines. Canada has bought more doses per head of population than any other — enough to vaccinate each Canadian 5 times, said the alliance, which includes Amnesty International, Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now and Oxfam.

Newsworthy

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

Approvals for drugs and vaccines usually take years, if not decades, while the COVID-19 vaccines have been pushed through in seemingly no time at all. That fact has everyone in the world asking the same 2 questions: Are we rushing the vaccines? Will the vaccines be safe? The answers to these questions are fairly complex, but basically boil down to no, we are not rushing the science, and yes, the vaccines will be safe. The [Medium Coronavirus blog](#) explains.

'Unpredictable pathogen': New COVID-19 study highlights severity of illness

While some people diagnosed with COVID-19 complain of symptoms like a loss of smell or taste, COVID-19 can cause a wide range of health complications far more serious than the typical symptoms, according to a new, wide-ranging study, [says Global News](#). Some of the most common complications associated with COVID-19 included pneumonia, respiratory failure, kidney failure and sepsis or systemic inflammation, [according to the peer-reviewed research](#) published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (CMAJ) on December 8. "For anyone that's thinking this is really not that serious a pathogen, have a read of that study," says Kerry Bowman, bioethicist and assistant professor at the University of Toronto.

Worth Repeating

"The biggest problem we're going to have is demand for COVID-19 vaccines, not refusal. We don't need to make the coronavirus vaccine mandatory for the general public. But it does need to be obligatory in some settings — such as nursing homes and hospitals. Some vaccines are already mandatory for health workers and this one should be too." — *The Globe and*

Mail's André Picard, on [prioritizing COVID-19 vaccines](#).

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.

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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