



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

Resource Round-up: Mental health

The new Resource Round-up series from the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) gathers available resources and practice tools on important health topics to help pharmacists optimize patient care in their communities. The second edition brings together tools related to mental health and wellness for pharmacy patients and pharmacists alike. As health-care workers on the front line, pharmacists are often the first point of contact for those struggling with their mental health, but the pandemic has also highlighted the importance of pharmacists looking after their own health and wellness. The resource page is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

CPhA board member appointed to new CADTH advisory panel to support development of national formulary

CPhA board member Shawn Bugden has been appointed to the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) *Pan-Canadian Advisory Panel on a Framework for a Prescription Drug List*. This advisory panel, created as part of the federal government's commitment to implementing pharmacare, has been tasked with making a series of recommendations to support the development of a national drug list, or formulary. Bugden is 1 of 2 pharmacists named to the panel, whose work is expected to be complete by April 2022. The recommendations will be shared with Health Canada, the provinces and territories, and the public. More information on the panel can be found on [the CADTH website](#).

Pharmacy on the front line

'Put us at ease': Kitchener pharmacist praised for kindness while administering COVID-19 vaccines

A Kitchener, ON, pharmacist is being praised by his patients for administering big doses of kindness when giving out COVID-19 vaccine jabs, [CTV reports](#). Virginia Tkach went to Queen's Pharmacy in Kitchener for her second dose and says her experience was worth sharing, praising pharmacist and owner Mina Abdel-Shahid. Despite having minimal staff to help, Abdel-Shahid takes time to speak to all his patients, especially those apprehensive about getting the COVID-19 vaccine. "I don't try to push it against them because you have to be comfortable with the decision that you make," he said. "I'm happy and grateful that in Canada we have enough vaccines for everybody. Always my advice is if you can get the vaccine, get the vaccine as soon as you can."

Provincial

OPA urges all health-care professionals to get COVID-19 vaccinations

The Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) strongly urges all health-care providers get fully vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves, their teams, and their patients against COVID-19 and its variants, [according to a news release](#). "To assist with the safe re-opening of Ontario it is integral that everyone, especially health care providers do their part and receive the COVID-19 vaccines. Receiving vaccinations provides significant protection against serious illness, hospitalization, and even death. It is important that Ontario's pharmacy professionals continue the momentum of administering vaccines, while also leading by being exemplary examples by being vaccinated," the statement says.

Thousands of COVID-19 vaccines could soon be discarded at Ontario pharmacies as demand declines

Thousands of doses of COVID-19 vaccines could soon be discarded at Ontario pharmacies as demand diminishes, [according to CTV](#). The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine lasts only 30 days in pharmacy fridges and must be discarded if not administered by then. However, demand for the brand in Ontario is declining, due in part to skepticism about mixing and matching doses and misinformation about Moderna. "While it is a shame if we do end up wasting, the extraction is very complex once the supply is distributed into the channel," Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association, says. Ontario's Ministry of Health told CTV it is working with local partners to redistribute doses to areas in need, as well as with federal partners "to explore vaccine donation opportunities in the future." Health Canada, meanwhile, said work is underway to develop options for excess doses, particularly in certified depots where integrity can be assured.

National

Canada has enough vaccine doses for all eligible Canadians

Canada has enough COVID-19 vaccine doses to fully vaccinate everyone eligible in the country, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said at a Moncton, NB, vaccine clinic on July 27, [CBC reports](#). The arrival of 5 million doses this week brings the total to over 66 million—enough for all 33.2 million Canadians 12 and older. “With enough doses for everyone, there’s no more excuses not to get your shot,” Trudeau said. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the government had set the end of September as the date when all Canadians who want to be fully vaccinated would be able to get both doses.

8 in 10 Canadians up for a booster dose to fend off the COVID-19 Delta variant: survey

A recent survey found that just over 8 in 10 Canadians would be willing to take a booster shot within the next year after their first 2 COVID-19 vaccine doses, [according to CTV](#). The survey from the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS) found that even in the 18-24 age range, the majority (74%) of those asked said they would be willing to get a booster shot to increase the body’s antibody response to the virus after the immune system has been “primed” by the first 2 doses. Those over 65 were most positive about a booster shot (92%). For those who have already received 2 doses, 93% said they’d be up for a booster, while 83% of those who have received a first vaccine said they would go for a booster.

HPSA issues urgent call for Canadians to return unused medications

The Health Products Stewardship Association (HPSA) is calling on Canadians to head to their local pharmacy with unwanted, unused, and expired medications, [Canadian Healthcare Network reports](#). According to HPSA, a national not-for-profit that operates medication-return programs, the issue is urgent. “The need for Canadians to take action is now more important than ever,” says HPSA Director General Terri Drover. “The pandemic has exacerbated the rate of accidental drug poisoning and overdose, which was already on the rise.” A recent [Statistics Canada report](#) found that since the start of the pandemic, the majority of excess deaths among Canadians under 65 came from substance abuse and overdose. Of particular concern is the increase in opioid-related deaths in the past year that have been reported by many provinces. “Access to excess drugs in the home can be a contributing factor, and so proper disposal is an essential practice to help curb the trend and protect Canadians,” Drover says.

International

US: APhA urges COVID-19 vaccine mandates for all health workers

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) [has joined more than 50 other health-care organizations](#) urging all health-care employers to require their employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The endorsement makes the health-care sector a leader in COVID-19 vaccination just as cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are once again rising throughout the US. “Employers have a fundamental responsibility to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety and well-being of their employees and the people they serve,” says APhA President Sandra Leal. “Due to the nature of the times we live in, this must include requiring their

employees be vaccinated, to protect themselves and others from the COVID-19 virus.” The societies and organizations represent millions of workers throughout health- and long-term care—from doctors and nurses to pharmacists and public health workers.

Australia: Decision to include all eligible pharmacies in COVID-19 vaccine rollout welcomed

The announcement by Australia’s Prime Minister Scott Morrison on the government’s decision to allow all 3,930 eligible community pharmacies across Australia to join the COVID-19 vaccination rollout has been welcomed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia as a significant step toward improving vaccination rates, [Mirage News reports](#). Trent Twomey, the National President of the Pharmacy Guild, said the decision would see thousands of community pharmacies delivering vaccinations where they are most needed. “These pharmacies have undergone all the training and meet all the necessary criteria to provide this service for patients,” Twomey said. “The announcement means patients across all of Australia will soon be able to access their COVID-19 vaccinations through their community pharmacy which is the most accessible health destination and often provides extended operating hours and access at weekends.”

UK: RPS and NHS join forces to support colleagues abroad during COVID crisis

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and National Health Service (NHS) England have come together to support countries in the fight against COVID-19, [according to a statement on the RPS website](#). RPS and NHS England are working with pharmacy colleagues internationally in countries like India to share resources and experiences to benefit clinicians and patients. “The ongoing COVID crisis in countries across the globe is truly distressing,” says Ravi Sharma, Director for RPS in England. “RPS is here to support pharmacy teams in the UK and across the world during this difficult time, and we are united with all pharmacy teams battling against the pandemic.”

UK: Contraceptive pill can be bought over the counter in UK pharmacies for the first time

Contraceptive pills are available to buy over the counter in pharmacies for the first time in the UK, [according to Sky News](#). Until now, patients have needed a prescription to get the pill. The change has been allowed for 2 types of progesterone-only, so-called “mini pills” because they were reclassified by the UK drugs regulator. Purchasers will still need to have a consultation with a pharmacist before being sold the tablets, which cost as little as the equivalent of C\$13 for a month’s supply. “This is a landmark in the history of women’s health,” pharmacist Bina Mehta told Sky News. “Ever since the contraceptive pill first came about over 60 years ago, if a woman wanted to get hold of a contraceptive medication they needed to make an appointment to see a GP. Now it’s so much more accessible.”

UK: Pharmacists in Boots stores given body cameras to prevent abuse

Boots employees—including pharmacy staff—working in 60 stores have been given body cameras to wear as a measure against the “increasing problem” of abuse from customers, [the Pharmaceutical Journal says](#). The body cameras were first piloted in early 2021 in “a small

number” of stores in Birmingham, with the initiative later rolled out to other stores. A spokesperson for Boots says that the pilot began following concerns “about the increasing problem of violence and abuse experienced by hundreds of thousands of retail workers, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In-Depth

Why is Delta such a big deal? And other burning questions

The rise of the Delta variant has driven new COVID-19 outbreaks, rattled markets, and reminded us that despite all the progress made in the fight against the pandemic, vulnerabilities persist. [STAT](#) runs through some of the most pressing questions and discusses how the variant is changing the landscape of the pandemic.

Worth repeating

“Refusing vaccination is a right. But working in a long-term care facility, attending a Colter Wall concert, and having a meal indoors at Boston Pizza are not rights. They are privileges for which vaccination should be a prerequisite.” – the *Globe and Mail*’s André Picard says [in an opinion piece](#) the time for debating COVID-19 vaccine certificates and passports is over and we need to focus on creating rules and documents that are simple, fair and efficient.

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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