



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Latest pharmacy developments in response to COVID-19

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CPhA

Webinar recording now available: The community pharmacy as a health hub

In case you missed it, a recording of our latest development webinar, [The community pharmacy as a health hub](#), is now available on our website. Our featured panellists discussed how community pharmacies are uniquely positioned to serve as health hubs and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected this model of care, sharing their innovative practices that combine education, advice and health-system navigation into patient care.

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

AB pharmacists administer 1 million COVID-19 shots

Alberta's community pharmacists surpassed 1 million COVID-19 vaccinations since the first group of 100 pharmacies began receiving vaccines in March of this year, says the Alberta

Pharmacists Association in a [news release](#). Since then, access to COVID-19 vaccines have expanded to include more than 1200 community pharmacies administering vaccines to as many eligible Albertans as the vaccine supply allows. As of May 23, Alberta's community pharmacists had administered 1,024,852 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, which represents 40% of all COVID-19 vaccines delivered in the province.

Pharmacies helping AB pull ahead in second dose distribution

With over 60% of eligible Albertans having received their first dose, at least some of the 1300 Alberta pharmacies assisting with the vaccine roll out are already doling out second round shots. One Edmonton pharmacist [told CTV News Edmonton](#) his pharmacy has vaccinated roughly 3000 Albertans since March. Access Pharmacy co-owner Dennis Cai said they have yet to waste a single dose. "It seems like most of the waitlist patients that we do call, they have already received their first dose," Cai said. "Sometimes if you're unable to find another first dose patient on short notice, we'll call someone who received their first dose in March to get their second dose slightly earlier. According to Alberta Health spokesperson Tom McMillan, pharmacies have vaccine wastage guidelines that include the distribution of second doses to prevent them from expiring before being used. "Pharmacies have been instructed to administer second doses in keeping with the provincial timelines," he said. "Pharmacies have been working incredibly hard to support Albertans during this challenging time. We could not safely rollout this vaccine without them."

SK pharmacies meeting demand for COVID-19 vaccines

After 1 month in the trenches, pharmacies are on board with COVID-19 vaccinations in Saskatchewan, [reports Canadian Healthcare Network](#) (subscriber access required). To date, 367 pharmacies are involved across the province, said Dawn Martin, Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS) executive director. "There have been some bumps with delivery dates, but mostly the front-line issues are around answering the multitude of phone calls from people wanting vaccines," Martin said. "Generally, it's getting better and better, but [it's a] very different system and reporting than with flu vaccines." Pharmacy demand has been strong, with online booking proving popular, and so far, pharmacies are keeping up with demand. "It's more a matter of supply being available," she adds, "but that will get much better next week as more is available."

Health Canada extends expiry date for thousands of AstraZeneca-Oxford doses

Ontario received permission from Health Canada to extend the expiry of some doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine on May 29, saving thousands of shots from potentially going to waste, [says the Canadian Press](#). A spokesperson for Health Minister Christine Elliott said the change means doses with an original expiry of May 31 can now be used until July 1. The CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) said Health Canada's decision is not unprecedented when it comes to evolving data associated with a new vaccine. "It's good news," Justin Bates said. "Although I do appreciate this is going to create a lot more questions... so people can continue to make an informed consent decision." Bates said pharmacies in different parts of

Ontario had ramped up efforts to get shots into arms and avoid wasting any doses — and those efforts will continue. “It does give us a longer runway and reduces the risk of any [waste], which I think is a good thing and that’s the silver lining in all of this,” he said.

NL pharmacists now administering COVID-19 vaccines

Pharmacists in Newfoundland and Labrador are now able to administer COVID-19 vaccinations. “Pharmacies are starting now,” Jennifer Collingwood, executive director of the Pharmacists’ Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), [explained to the Canadian Healthcare Network](#) (subscriber access required). Newfoundland and Labrador is the last province to allow pharmacists to vaccinate patients against COVID-19, coming months after pharmacists in many other regions of the country began. The government’s reason for the delay, noted Collingwood, has been sufficient capacity within Public Health and an unstable vaccine supply. PANL has been pushing for pharmacist engagement. In its document *Role of NL Pharmacies and Pharmacists in COVID-19 Vaccinations*, the association recommended the government leverage all immunizers in the vaccine roll-out to ensure residents are vaccinated as swiftly as possible.

National

Canada to receive 2.9M vaccine doses this week

Canada is set to receive 2.9 million COVID-19 vaccine doses this week thanks in large part to an increase in planned deliveries from Pfizer-BioNTech, [reports the Canadian Press](#). About 2 million shots per week were delivered through the month of May, but increased that to 2.4 million doses per week starting May 31. The federal government says the other 500,000 shots due to arrive this week will come from Moderna, which will deliver the shots in 2 separate shipments. The first will arrive in the middle of the week while the second is due for delivery this weekend, with the doses set for distribution to provinces and territories next week.

NACI allows for mixing and matching COVID-19 vaccines

Canada’s National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has changed its guidelines to allow for mixing and matching COVID-19 vaccines, [according to CTV](#). Federal health officials announced the updated guidance on June 1, saying that a first dose of the AstraZeneca-Oxford/COVISHIELD vaccine can be followed up with a second AstraZeneca shot, or be safely combined with a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna shots “unless contraindicated.” The [new guidance](#) from NACI also advises that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines can be mixed for first and second doses.

International

Moderna files for full US approval of COVID-19 vaccine

Moderna has started an application for full US approval of its COVID-19 vaccine, which is currently only authorized for emergency use in the country, [Reuters reports](#). The development comes weeks after Pfizer-BioNTech sought full approval for their COVID-19 vaccine in the

United States. Full approval for the vaccines, which are at the forefront of global immunization efforts, could be an important step in allaying vaccine hesitancy, a growing concern in the US and other nations.

Pharmacy on the front line

Meet Selena Colarossi: public health pharmacist

As health workers have stepped up at great personal risk, community members, advocates and members of the health community have done crucial — yet less visible — work to support the health effort and ensure no one gets left behind. One of those unsung heroes is Halton Region public health pharmacist Selena Colarossi. Long before a COVID-19 dose gets put into someone's arm, it arrives at a vaccine management centre where a public health pharmacist records it in the province's virtual vaccine inventory, allocates it to a specific clinic, packs it in a cooler to be shipped and tracks crucial details like the number of doses per vial and the expiration date. "We physically handle every vial that goes out to the entire region of Halton," said Colarossi, in a [Toronto Star profile](#). It may not be as glamorous as administering shots on the front lines — something she previously got to experience working in a pharmacy — but she's proud to play a key role in facilitating the vaccine rollout and ensuring things run smoothly at clinics. "Watching those vials go out every day and watching those numbers go down in COVax of patients being immunized is just incredible to see."

Pharmacy students from U of T play key role in COVID-19 vaccine rollout

Pharmacists are typically among the most accessible health-care providers in the community, and during the pandemic they have applied their training to offer unique education and support to patients about vaccines. As Ontario emerges from the third wave of COVID-19, U of T pharmacists and PharmD students have proven critical to an effective vaccine rollout, expanding vaccine campaigns to community pharmacies across the province and taking on preparation and injection roles in hospitals and pop-up clinics. In this [article from U of T News](#), students Katarina Pessina, Hazra Chowdhury and Kari Griffore, describe participating in Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

How University of Waterloo pharmacy students are helping with COVID-19 vaccine rollout

Maria Anton and Olivia Joy McPherson see people laugh and cry after receiving their COVID-19 vaccine, [reports CTV](#). The third-year University of Waterloo pharmacy students work at the Health Sciences Clinic in Kitchener. "We call it the happiest place on the Earth because it's just the best feeling getting to see how excited people are," Anton said. McPherson credits some of that joy to the passion of the people working in the clinic. "Everyone's really passionate on the staff and I think that just kind of seeps into the patients," she said. Anton and McPherson said their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic have reinforced their desire to help people once they graduate. "I definitely want to work in a hands-on capacity," Anton said. "I don't think I can work at a desk or behind-the-scenes. I definitely really love being at the forefront of what's going on." McPherson said the pandemic has reinforced her passion for community pharmacy.

SK pharmacist says first vaccine dose kept her out of the hospital

When Julie Nykiforuk woke up with a sore throat on May 9, she thought she was just run down. She had been working long hours at Midtown Pharmacy in Davidson, SK, immunizing others against COVID-19, she says in an [interview with Global News](#). “Honestly, I thought I just had a cold because I had been vaccinated,” said Nykiforuk, who had her first dose on March 30. Given her symptoms, she went to go get tested later that morning anyway and then spent the rest of the day and the one after that back in bed. On May 11 she got her result: positive. She isn’t sure where she contracted the virus, but she thinks being partially immunized against it is what kept her out of the hospital. She noted a healthy colleague around the same age was diagnosed with COVID before getting a first shot and ended up an in-patient. “I do think it made a difference,” she said. “I’m grateful I had it, that I didn’t get any worse. “Based on what I know and went through, get your vaccine. We know that the vaccines prevent hospitalizations and they prevent death.”

In-depth

NACI approves mixing COVID vaccines: a backgrounder

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) just gave the official okay for the [mixing-and-matching](#) of COVID-19 vaccines. On June 1, [NACI released guidance](#) on vaccine interchangeability that could affect second doses for everyone who has received any one of the 3 vaccines currently in use: Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca. In this [backgrounder](#), Macleans takes a look at what it means and what you need to know.

For both the COVID vaccine hesitant and the refusers, much comes down to a lack of trust

Vaccine acceptance runs the gamut, from “accept all with utter confidence” to “refuse all with absolute conviction” and the reasons why people fall where they do are complex and vary, [says the National Post](#). Emerging research from Canada, the US and the UK suggests the COVID-19 vaccine-hesitant and resisters share some psychological characteristics. For both the hesitant and refusers, much comes down to trust, or lack of it.

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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