



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Latest pharmacy developments in response to COVID-19

June 9, 2021

CPhA

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. Of particular note this week is the expansion of second dose eligibility in many jurisdictions across Canada. 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

BC pharmacies ramping up COVID vaccine rollout

On June 7, BC pharmacies began reaching out to people who got their first shot of AstraZeneca to register them for their second dose, [says CityNews 1130](#). BC's top doctor has said there should be at least 8 weeks between doses. Chris Chiew, general manager of pharmacies for London Drugs, said they've now received a new shipment of 2,000 additional AstraZeneca doses, which they intend to have ready to get into arms by mid-week for those who got their first doses back in January. "We'll be able to reach those people first. Then, as the government sees how much we're going through, they'll release more to us as we're going through the vaccine," Chiew explained.

ON pharmacies deal with challenges of first and second doses

Keeping up with the need for first and now second doses is causing an Ontario-wide problem, said Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association, [in an interview with CBC](#). “The unpredictability of the supply coming in has always been our biggest challenge in trying to get the vaccine out to as many people as possible,” Bates said, adding that many people are vaccine shopping, and some who are eligible to move their second dose up are choosing to get it at a pharmacy — even though they may have received their first shot elsewhere. While the association agrees with expanding eligibility, Bates said it needs to be timed better with the existing supply and communicated to pharmacies earlier so they can handle questions from the public. Canada recently approved the mixing of vaccines for second doses, and while Ontario has rolled out plans to allow for that change, Bates said supply issues could continue to burden pharmacies if people who got a first dose of AstraZeneca switch to an mRNA vaccine like Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna. “Our ideal scenario would be a flexible, more routine ordering system whereby we can order the exact amount, as opposed to auto shipments every week, to meet the appointments that the pharmacy has.”

QC pharmacies want increased deliveries of COVID-19 vaccines

Pharmacists in Quebec say there is still too much uncertainty surrounding the delivery of COVID-19 vaccine doses to pharmacies in the province, [according to the Canadian Press](#). Benoit Morin, president of l'Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP), says that during the first-dose campaign, the lack of predictability of deliveries, combined with insufficient quantities, limited vaccination potential in pharmacies. He notes continued ambiguity will affect their ability to offer patients their second vaccine doses, now that the government has moved up the dates of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna from 16 to 8 weeks. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Quebec's pharmacies have administered more than 600,000 doses. Morin notes the network has a monthly vaccination capacity of 500,000 doses, so it is possible to immunize more people if the government sends the pharmacies enough vaccines to do so.

National

COVID-19 shows pharmacists have bigger role to play in Canada's health-care system

In the confusing early days of the pandemic when many family doctors' offices unexpectedly closed to in-person appointments, phones started ringing off the hook at pharmacies across the country, [reports CBC's White Coat, Black Art](#). “Pharmacists were the only health-care provider the patients could still see in person,” said Kaitlyn Watson, a pharmacy post-doctoral fellow with the EPICORE Centre at the University of Alberta's Department of Medicine in Edmonton. Watson and other health-care researchers say the pandemic has demonstrated how pharmacists can and should play a bigger role in Canada's health-care system because they're not only a readily accessible source of essential medications, but also medical advice and referrals. Accessibility is a part of that. A trip to the pharmacist is often a short walk or car ride, as opposed to a longer journey to the nearest hospital, said Kelly Grindrod, a pharmacist and

professor in pharmacy innovation at the University of Waterloo.

Canada to receive 2.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine this week

Canada is scheduled to receive 2.4 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine this week as more Canadians get their first and second jabs, [says the Canadian Press](#). Those shots are the only expected shipments in what should be a comparatively quiet week of vaccine deliveries. Moderna shipped 500,000 doses last week, with another 1.5 million shots due to arrive next week. Ottawa is also expecting another 1 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine by the end of June, though a detailed delivery schedule has not been confirmed.

Feds to lift 14-day quarantine requirement for fully vaccinated Canadian travellers

The federal government is set to announce on June 9 that fully vaccinated Canadian travellers will no longer need to spend 14 days in quarantine upon arriving home, [according to the Canadian Press](#). A federal source familiar with the policy says the change will go into effect in early July. Affected travellers will be required to take a COVID-19 test upon arrival in Canada and remain in isolation until the test comes back negative. The government will also eliminate the need for fully vaccinated Canadian air travellers to spend 3 days quarantining in an authorized hotel upon arriving in the country.

Calls grow for national guidance on life after second dose

As eligibility for second doses expands, the call for national guidance for fully vaccinated Canadians is increasing, [says the Globe and Mail](#). The Public Health Agency of Canada, unlike its counterpart in the US, has yet to provide such guidance, and federal opposition parties say the federal government is behind on offering guidance to people who are fully vaccinated. The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued its first guidance for fully vaccinated people on March 8, updating it on May 28. People who have received both shots can resume normal activities without wearing masks or physically distancing, except where required by local laws or regulations; travel domestically without COVID-19 testing or quarantining; and travel internationally without testing before leaving the US or quarantining upon return.

Moderna seeks approval for vaccine use in kids 12 and up; Pfizer to study vaccine in children under 12

Moderna is asking Health Canada to approve its COVID-19 vaccine for use in adolescents aged 12 and older, following a study that showed doses were “highly effective” at preventing infection in that age group, [reports Global News](#). The submission was made June 7 and is currently awaiting Health Canada’s go-ahead. Earlier this week [Pfizer said it will start](#) a large study to test its COVID-19 vaccine in children under 12. The study will enrol up to 4,500 children at more than 90 clinical sites in the US, Finland, Poland and Spain, the company said.

International

Australia: Community pharmacists begin COVID-19 vaccinations

On June 7, COVID vaccinations for members of the public began to be offered in 49 community pharmacies across the Australian state of Queensland, [says AJP](#). Trent Twomey, national president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, said the start of the vaccination rollout in pharmacies was an important step in the effort to maximize immunization rates across all of Australia. “This is a watershed moment in helping to maximize the uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations in Australia,” he said. “With the community pharmacy network extending into areas where at times the pharmacist is the only healthcare professional available it is clear that this is a major step forward in achieving maximum uptake of vaccinations.”

England: 500 community pharmacies have administered more than 5 million vaccinations

England's COVID-19 vaccination minister has paid special thanks to more than 500 community pharmacies that have administered more than 5 million vaccinations, [reports C+D](#). Announcing the milestone June 3, Nadhim Zahawi thanked pharmacy staff and volunteers for their “fantastic effort” as part of the 66 million jabs already given. Meanwhile, pharmacy minister Jo Churchill described the milestone as “tremendous news on top of pharmacies delivering record flu jabs earlier in the year, demonstrating how trusted our pharmacy teams are by their communities to help look after their health.” The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) described the milestone as the result of a “massive effort” from community pharmacy.

US: Walgreens offering new COVID-19 testing option for international travellers

Walgreens' latest COVID-19 diagnostic test offering is looking to help travellers returning to the US meet international travel requirements, [according to Drug Store News](#). Certain Walgreens locations in New York and New Jersey are offering the Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Home Test, administered by eMed. The rapid antigen tests meet the requirement from the CDC that international travellers test negative for COVID-19 before returning to the US. Travellers can purchase the test kit and travel with it in their carry-on bag. Then, before returning to the US, they can log into eMed and a live eMed certified guide will monitor sample collection, testing and results reporting. If the test is negative, the traveller will receive a temporary digital health certificate in the NAVICA app used in tandem with the home test.

US hits vaccine milestone, may miss July 4 goal

The US has administered more than 300 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, meeting another milestone in the effort to tamp down COVID-19, [says Medscape](#). Now 63.5% of US adults have received at least 1 vaccine dose, and 51.5% of the total population has received at least 1 dose. Despite the progress, the country may fall short of President Joe Biden's goal of 70% of adults receiving at least 1 shot by July 4. Officials are trying to boost vaccination rates by promoting incentives such as cash lotteries, college scholarships, vacation packages and free beer. Even still, the US is averaging fewer than 1 million shots per day, dropping from a peak of 3.4 million in April, according to CDC data trends.

'Very much a judgment call': David Naylor on AstraZeneca and buyer's remorse

The changing advice on vaccines, particularly when it comes to AstraZeneca, has caused confusion and frustration for many people. [TVO.org spoke](#) with the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force co-chair about risks, studies — and the factors to consider when booking a second shot.

Worth repeating

"I don't think it's a criticism of other health care professions so much as just the reality that when you're in a pandemic and health care gets turned on its head, sometimes the pharmacy becomes the safety net that catches the people who can't navigate the health care system in this new pandemic reality." — Kelly Grindrod, University of Waterloo professor in Pharmacy Innovation and the 2020 Canadian Pharmacist of the Year, speaking on pharmacists' expanding role in health care to [CBC's *White Coat, Black Art*](#).

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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