



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

CPhA welcomes new federal cabinet

CPhA is pleased to welcome the new federal cabinet, announced by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on October 26. Most significantly for our efforts, [Jean-Yves Duclos](#) (Quebec) was appointed Minister of Health, and [Carolyn Bennett](#) (Toronto-St. Paul's) was appointed to the new post of Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health. Former Minister of Health [Patty Hajdu](#) becomes the Minister of Indigenous Services. Based on the Liberal platform and the minority nature of this government, we anticipate a significant push on their policy and legislative agenda over the coming 12–18 months. We're moving quickly to engage with the new ministers, their staff and the Prime Minister's Office to provide input on mandate letters. CPhA looks forward to working with the new federal government and opposition parties as we continue to advance the advocacy priorities laid out in [our 2021 election platform](#).

Webinar recording available: The pharmacist's role in managing chronic kidney disease

Pharmacists play a vital role in assessing risk of chronic kidney disease in their patients, and earlier intervention can significantly impact patient outcomes. In this educational webinar from October 13, Michael Boivin, clinical pharmacist consultant, discussed how new practice and guidance changes following outcomes from major cardio-renal studies can result in earlier identification of at-risk patients and enhanced health outcomes. This webinar was hosted by CPhA on behalf of AstraZeneca. The content was developed by the speaker and is not accredited. The webinar recording can be [viewed here](#).

Pharmacists on the front line

Cambridge, ON, pharmacy vandalized for the second time in 2 weeks

For the second time in 2 weeks, the Cambridge Medical Pharmacy has been vandalized, [says CTV](#). Waterloo Regional Police say they are investigating after rocks with “messages and graphics with possible inferences to anti-vaccination” were thrown through the pharmacy’s front windows. Nimmit Vyas, the pharmacy’s owner, said a bigger rock was thrown through the window this time. “It is heartbreaking,” he said. “It’s scary that it happened again.” Staff at the pharmacy have administered about 2000 COVID-19 vaccinations so far this year. Vyas said he still has to fix the damaged window and is considering adding bars for extra security.

Provincial

SK pharmacies warned of vaccination fraud

The Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals has advised its members that vaccine fraud is occurring within the province, [reports DiscoverWeyburn.com](#). In an email, the college explained that people are paying others to get vaccinated under their name, using their health cards. The college is requiring all pharmacies to ensure there is a process in place to verify identity for all COVID-19 immunizations for those 16 and older, including using health cards and government-issued photo ID. The email also said the Saskatchewan Health Authority implemented the policy change not only for COVID-19 immunizations, but flu immunizations as well.

Student’s research contributes to quit-smoking program planned for Manitoba pharmacies

A research study by a University of Manitoba (UM) pharmacy student is playing a role in a unique program to help Manitobans quit smoking, [says UM Today News](#). Christine Vaccaro, who will graduate in 2023, recently conducted a study of pharmacists’ needs as they prepare to offer the Quit Smoking with Your Manitoba Pharmacist program. “The insights from Christine’s research have helped Pharmacists Manitoba understand the supports pharmacists need to make the program successful,” says Dr. Brenna Shearer, former CEO of Pharmacists Manitoba, clinical assistant professor at the College of Pharmacy and supervisor of the study. The program, to be launched in January 2022, will pay pharmacies for assessment, prescribing, counselling and follow-up sessions that pharmacists complete with patients. It will be managed by Pharmacists Manitoba, the non-profit advocacy body for pharmacists in the province.

What’s stopping pharmacists from selling at-home COVID tests?

Search “pharmacy rapid tests” on Twitter and plenty of the results will include Canadians who are angry that they can’t purchase at-home rapid antigen COVID-19 tests at their local pharmacy. Many complain that pharmacies are charging \$40 to administer tests that they believe pharmacists received for free from the federal government. Kristen Watt, a pharmacist in

Southampton, ON, [tells Canadian Healthcare Network](#) that she is [doing her best to educate Canadians](#) and correct the misinformation. “The tests we administer for \$40, we bought those tests. They were not free from the government. The cost is for test administration, interpretation and record provision. Pharmacies are getting a lot of heat for the inability to provide these tests to the general public for their own use, while being able to administer them at a cost in the pharmacy and it’s simply because we’re following the rules,” Watt says. Justin Bates, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA), has also tried to correct misinformation on Twitter. “@OntPharmacists advocates for more free distribution of rapid tests in #pharmacies and elsewhere as an effective tool to help combat COVID especially in congregate settings like schools. Get the tests out and into the hands of as many people as possible,” he tweeted last week.

Nova Scotians encouraged to get flu shots as pharmacists predict potential resurgence

Pharmacists across Nova Scotia are urging people to get their flu shots this year to prevent a potential resurgence of the influenza virus. “When I get my flu vaccine, I need to protect myself, my family, those that can’t get the vaccine and ultimately the whole system here in Nova Scotia,” Diane Harpell, a pharmacist in Dartmouth, [told CBC](#). Harpell, who is also the chair of the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia, said that she expects to see more cases of the flu since people have started travelling again. “There’s a lot of people coming in and out of the province, so there’s going to be bugs coming in and one of those is likely going to be the flu,” she said. Harpell said this is why flu shots will be incredibly important to prevent further strain on the health-care system during the COVID-19 pandemic. “We’ve done so well through all of this to make sure that our resources are still well managed through COVID,” she said. “Making sure that we’re doing what we can to protect ourselves from other very dangerous viruses like influenza will be important to make sure that we keep hospital resources open for those who truly need it.”

National

Consistent communication needed for kids COVID-19 vaccine rollout

Kelly Grindrod remembers the confusion pharmacists felt last spring as Canada’s COVID-19 vaccine policy changed rapidly throughout the rollout, sometimes with little warning. Shifting eligibility requirements differed across the country, booking sites were harder to navigate in some regions and 1 vaccine product came to be seen as inferior to the rest, infuriating the public and vaccinators alike, [reports the Canadian Press](#). Grindrod, an associate professor at the University of Waterloo and the pharmacy lead for Waterloo Region’s vaccine rollout, hopes provinces learned lessons from Canada’s first vaccination campaign for adults. And if a COVID-19 vaccine is soon approved for children, a kids’ rollout needs consistent and clear messaging. “Communication was a real challenge,” Grindrod recalled. “(Policy) would be announced nationally and everybody on the ground had to scramble because we were all hearing it at the same time. Immediately the phones would go crazy in pharmacies because people were trying to make sense of it... We need a bit more lead-in, a bit more clarity, so (vaccinators) have answers

before people start calling.”

Trudeau urged to make decriminalization of drugs a priority

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is being urged to decriminalize the possession and use of drugs as a way to combat the opioid crisis that has resulted in thousands of deaths in Canada, [says the Canadian Press](#). Almost 70 organizations from across the country, including the HIV Legal Network, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association and the National Association of Women and the Law, have written a letter to Trudeau asking that he make drug policy reform a priority for his newly re-elected Liberal government. They want drug possession to be immediately decriminalized and all criminal sanctions and penalties related to drug use to be eliminated. And they want federal funding to ensure “low-barrier access” to a safe supply of drugs. Almost 23,000 Canadians died from an opioid overdose between January 2016 and March 2021 and the groups say that those deaths were fuelled by “a contaminated drug supply and the stigma associated with drug use,” which is only reinforced by criminalizing drugs and drug users.

Pharmacies get inventive as US border reopens

A COVID-19 test could be booked along with the purchase of Buffalo Bills or Sabres tickets as American pharmacies seek to provide services to an expected surge of Canadians travelling across the border when it reopens for non-essential travel. Done right, the test result could be emailed to a traveller before the game is even over, Joe Bellavia, supervising pharmacist at Vital Pharmacy in Buffalo, [told CTV News](#). “A Sabres game is a perfect example. They could come and be tested before the game, enjoy dinner and we can provide them the results before it’s time to go home,” he said. Vital Pharmacy is just one example of inventive COVID-19 test ideas being offered on both sides of the border, seeking to find ways to make it convenient—if not necessarily cheap—to cross the border. On the Canadian side, Go Test Rapid has set up a drive-through testing tent on Jane Street just north of Highway 401 in Toronto. They’re counting on travellers who are going on short trips wanting to get a test before they cross the border because the 72-hour window gives people a lot of flexibility. “Some people are getting those PCR tests on the way out, and that means they’re already set up for the way back,” Go Test Rapid’s marketing manager, Eden Hazan, says.

International

US pharmacy associations welcome plan for COVID-19 shots for children aged 5 to 11

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) have welcomed the Biden administration’s announcement of operational planning for COVID-19 vaccinations for children aged 5 to 11, [reports Drug Store News](#). “The newly announced plan would help ensure that eligible individuals can equitably and efficiently access COVID vaccines at local pharmacies in the days following a CDC recommendation,” NACDS said. “Pharmacies remain critical access points in the ongoing vaccination effort and, as the 2021–2022 flu season persists, pharmacies continue to meet the nation’s preventive care vaccination needs, all in one visit. Pharmacies will stand ready to provide vital access to COVID

vaccines for children ages 5 to 11—when authorized and recommended to do so.” APhA also voiced strong support for the Biden administration’s efforts, noting that “It will take everyone in the immunization neighborhood to get the job done—pharmacists, pharmacy interns, pharmacy technicians, public health, physicians, nurses and other trusted community stakeholders.”

Walmart must pay pharmacist US\$27.5M for denying breaks, overtime pay

A California court awarded US\$27.5 million to pharmacist Afrouz Nikmanesh after she filed a class-action lawsuit against Walmart, her former employer, according to [Becker's Hospital Review](#). In her complaint, Dr. Nikmanesh said Walmart denied her breaks and overtime wages, gave her inaccurate wage statements and terminated her employment wrongfully. She also said the retail giant forced her to study for and take an immunization certification exam but did not compensate her for this off-the-clock work. During her time as a Walmart pharmacist, Nikmanesh drew attention to noncompliance issues, claiming the pharmacy charged Medicare patients above the Medi-Cal reimbursement rate and did not provide eligible beneficiaries with their Medicare discounts. The lawsuit alleged her 2014 termination was a result of her bringing up these issues. “Walmart continues to believe that our associates handled Ms. Nikmanesh’s employment consistently, a company spokesperson said in a statement, and they followed what was required by law. We do not believe the jury’s verdict is supported by the facts and that based on the evidence, no punitive damages should be awarded. We are reviewing our options.”

COVID-19, flu shots need not be mandatory for health and care staff, says RPS

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) reaffirmed its view that COVID-19 and flu vaccinations for health and care staff should not be made mandatory, [says Pharmacy Business](#). In its response to the government consultation on mandatory vaccination for health and care staff in England, RPS said, “We actively and strongly encourage all pharmacists to take advantage of the COVID-19 program and to get vaccinated unless there is a medical reason why they are unable to.” However, it opposed making the shot a mandatory condition, saying, “Informed and educated choices about health interventions are more beneficial long-term than enforcing them.” At the same time, it encouraged all pharmacy teams to take the necessary vaccines to protect themselves, patients and the wider community. “We consider this to be best practice and within the standards for pharmacy professionals where pharmacists should make the care of the person their first concern and act in their best interests.”

New report discusses barriers that stand in the way of pharmacists’ participation in self-care

GSK Consumer Healthcare has [launched a new report](#), *Standing with Pharmacists in the Age of Self-Care*, that discusses how the barriers that stand in the way of pharmacists’ full participation in self-care can be tackled. The report presents the findings from a roundtable discussion hosted by GSK Consumer Healthcare earlier this year in partnership with International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), which convened representatives and leaders from the global pharmacy and broader self-care communities to discuss how industry players can work together to ensure pharmacists’ full and effective utilization within self-care globally. It also included a new 3-year

commitment plan by the company to empower the pharmacy profession with policy and regulation change, mental health provisions, and additional practical resources.

In-Depth

What we know (and what we don't) about clinical use of psychedelics drugs

Patients may start asking more about psychedelics. While there have been some promising results from trials involving psychedelic-assisted therapy, many questions remain, [says Canadian Healthcare Network](#) (subscriber access only).

Worth Repeating

“When mental health is on our minds like never before—thanks largely to the psychological beat-down COVID-19 has delivered, individually and collectively—we need more than symbolism.” — *Globe and Mail* health columnist André Picard [on the move to create](#) a new and separate post, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, calling it a bold symbolic step, but symbolism is not enough.

This weekly 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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