

**From:** Public & Professional Affairs Department  
**Sent:** September 2, 2020 4:42 PM  
**Subject:** The Weekly: CPhA's COVID-19 Update for September 2



**September 2, 2020**

## **CPhA**

### ***Upcoming webinar: Preparing for Flu Season: Suggested Best Practices for Community Pharmacy***

The next webinar in CPhA's COVID Conversations series will take place on **Thursday, September 10** from **1:00-2:30pm** EDT. With an expected increase in patient demand for flu vaccinations this year and a possible second wave of COVID-19 predicted, community pharmacy is bracing for a challenging 2020/21 influenza season. Pharmacists are preparing now for how they will manage the additional time, tasks and supplies they will need to safely provide immunizations to their patients this fall, while protecting themselves and their staff. In this accredited webinar, host Shelita Dattani and a panel of pharmacists from across the country will discuss some key challenges and practical solutions and will walk through a series of case scenarios presenting different delivery options. [Learn more and register](#) on our website. (CCCEP file #: 8002-2020-3090-L-P, 1.5 CEUs)

CPhA's COVID-19 web pages are being updated regularly at [www.pharmacists.ca/covid19](http://www.pharmacists.ca/covid19) and [www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr](http://www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr).

## **Provincial**

### ***While pharmacy COVID-19 testing expands in AB, ON considers it***

While the Alberta government has expanded COVID-19 testing to all Alberta pharmacies as part of the province's overall strategy for widespread testing, Ontario is looking at how to integrate pharmacies into the provincial COVID-19 Diagnostic Network, says health ministry spokesperson Alexandra Hilkene, according to [Canadian Healthcare Network](#) (subscriber access only). The Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) is supportive of COVID-19 testing, asking the province for authority to do asymptomatic COVID-19 testing in pharmacies. "We looked at the Alberta model and see an opportunity for a similar program here on an opt-in basis," says Justin Bates, OPA's CEO. "There are so many regulatory pieces needed to enable pharmacists to participate and we've put forward a robust proposal for asymptomatic testing. It would involve educating pharmacists to ensure they can do it. In the longer term, pharmacists could also do serological testing of blood or saliva. That's where the future is."

## **National**

### ***Neighbourhood pharmacies are critical for reopening of schools***

As Canada prepares for the school year to start, access to COVID-19 testing and influenza immunization are top of mind for the health and wellness of students, teachers and their families, says the [Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada](#) (NPAC). "We urge all provinces to empower pharmacists to provide point of care testing and specimen collection in partnership with laboratories to increase access," says Sandra Hanna, pharmacist and CEO of NPAC. "To alleviate the strain on parts of the health system that are overloaded by COVID-19, it is critical to expand the scope of practice for pharmacists across the country, so that we can provide the care our patients need when and where they need it most."

### **Health Canada will review applications for at-home COVID-19 testing devices**

Health Canada has confirmed that it will review applications for at-home COVID-19 testing devices after recently stating that it would not do so, says the [Globe and Mail](#). The press secretary for the office of the Health Minister said in a statement that despite deciding in June that it would not review applications for such DIY test kits, new information has emerged and the department has changed tack. “In response to the evolution of the pandemic, Health Canada is now considering applications for home testing devices for screening purposes,” says Health Canada’s Cole Davidson. “Health Canada is open to reviewing all testing solutions. This includes approaches that use self-collection and/or at-home test kits, in particular for screening purposes.”

### **Ottawa signs COVID-19 vaccine deals with 2 US companies**

Ottawa has struck new deals with 2 additional US companies working to develop a COVID-19 vaccine as it seeks to improve its chances for Canadians to receive a vaccine quickly, the [Globe and Mail reports](#). The federal government announced on August 31 it has signed agreements with Novavax to supply up to 76 million doses and Johnson & Johnson for up to 38 million doses of their respective candidate vaccines. That means Canada now has agreements with 4 international biotech companies.

### **Canada-China COVID-19 vaccine trials abandoned: National Research Council**

A COVID-19 vaccine–development partnership between China’s CanSino Biologics and Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia has been abandoned, [reports the Canadian Press](#). The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) says the CanSino vaccine intended for phase 1 clinical trials has not been approved by Chinese customs for shipment to Canada. Because of that delay, the NRC says the opportunity to conduct the trials is over.

### **Most Canadians pleased with government handling of pandemic: poll**

The majority of Canadians believe their government has done a good job in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and they’re more united now than they were before the outbreak. That’s according to a new [Pew Research Center public opinion survey](#), which asked 14,276 adults in 14 countries to rate their nation’s response to the health emergency and the unity of its citizens. Among the 1,037 Canadians surveyed from June 10 to August 3, 88% said their country had done a “good” job of handling the pandemic while only 11% viewed the government as having done a “bad” job. The US and UK were the only 2 countries on the list where the majority of citizens said their governments had done badly in their response, with 52% expressing dissatisfaction in the US and 54% in the UK.

## **International**

### **FIP holding statement on interferon beta and vaccination for COVID-19**

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has issued a new [holding statement on interferon beta and vaccination for COVID-19](#). The statement welcomes the promising results with the trial medicine SNG001, which contains interferon beta delivered via an inhaler, but asked for peer review and publishing of the trial data as necessary next steps before its inclusion in FIP’s COVID-19 guidelines. Regarding vaccinations, FIP supports the need for a large phase 3 trial to generate the relevant efficacy and safety data, agreeing with the position of international regulators that vaccines should be assessed on a case-by-case basis (depending on how each vaccine is constructed and the totality of data available) and meet robust success criteria.

### **FIP to assess impact of COVID-19 on pharmaceutical services worldwide**

FIP is conducting a global survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on community and hospital medicines supply pharmaceutical services. Data collection and interpretation related to COVID-19 will provide valuable insight for future advocacy work. The organization invites its member organizations and pharmacy leadership bodies around the world to support this work by taking part in the survey [here](#). Deadline to complete the survey is September 14.

### **Moderna vaccine produces antibodies in trial of older people**

Moderna Inc. presented new safety data from an early trial that provides the first evidence that its COVID-19 vaccine stimulates the immune systems of older people, says [Bloomberg News](#). In a phase 1 trial, Moderna’s coronavirus vaccine produced

“consistently high levels” of neutralizing antibodies—a key component of the body’s protective response—in older adults, the company says. Antibody levels in people more than 55 years old were comparable to those seen in younger adults.

### ***Updated CDC guidelines now say people exposed to coronavirus may not need to be tested***

In a shift that has perplexed some doctors, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has changed its [COVID-19 testing guidelines](#) to say some people without symptoms may not need to be tested, even if they’ve been in close contact with someone known to have the virus, [reports CNN](#). Previously, the CDC said viral testing was appropriate for people with recent or suspected exposure, even if they were asymptomatic.

### ***New reckoning for WHO vaccine plan as governments go it alone***

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) plan to democratize access to COVID-19 vaccines has been undercut by self-interest of wealthy nations, [Reuters says](#). The COVAX program was intended to unite countries around the world, inviting them to pay into a communal fund that would procure vaccines and ensure they were equitably distributed according to need. But in the months since the program’s debut, the US, UK and European Union have struck their own deals with drug manufacturers, potentially squeezing the global supply and leaving COVAX out in the cold.

### ***US will not join international efforts to develop, manufacture and distribute COVID-19 vaccine***

The Trump administration will not join an international cooperative effort to develop, manufacture, and distribute a COVID-19 vaccine, in part, because the WHO is involved, a decision that could shape the course of the pandemic and the country’s role in health diplomacy, the [Washington Post reports](#). More than 170 countries are in talks to participate in the so-called COVAX facility, which aims to speed vaccine development, secure doses for all countries and distribute them to the most high-risk segment of each population.

### ***Trump has launched an all-out attack on the FDA. Will its scientific integrity survive?***

US President Donald Trump has instigated an all-out crusade against the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at a critical point in the federal government’s fight against COVID-19, [STAT reports](#). Senior FDA officials and several outside experts say that Trump’s attacks threaten to permanently damage the agency’s credibility, especially when combined with a disastrous series of public misstatements last week from FDA commissioner Stephen Hahn.

### ***Leaked email reveals CVS district leader instructed pharmacy staff not to tell patients their medications were filled by someone who tested positive for COVID-19***

A leaked email reveals that a CVS Pharmacy district leader instructed employees not to tell patients that their medications had been filled by someone who tested positive for COVID-19, [Business Insider reports](#). The Georgia CVS technician who shared the email claimed the company threatened to discipline or fire staff if they told customers about confirmed COVID-19 cases. CVS denied it has a policy to prohibit pharmacies “from informing patients if their prescription was filled when an employee who tested positive for COVID-19 worked in the pharmacy.”

## **Newsorthy**

### ***Why Canada is hedging its bets when it comes to a COVID-19 vaccine***

Canada has struck deals with 4 different drug companies to procure a potential COVID-19 vaccine, but an infectious diseases specialist says it’s still too early to know what bet will be worth taking. Dr. Michael Gardam, an infectious disease specialist at Women’s College Hospital in Toronto, spoke to [CBC’s As It Happens](#) about what we do and don’t know about the possible 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.