

From: Public & Professional Affairs Department
Sent: September 23, 2020 4:46 PM
Subject: The Weekly: CPhA's COVID-19 Update for September 23



September 23, 2020

CPhA

Upcoming webinar: Pharmacy's future: How COVID-19 is changing public behaviour and what that means for pharmacy

CPhA is thrilled to launch our new webinar series, [Virtually Together: Critical Insights on Critical Issues](#). Our first session, [Pharmacy's future: How COVID-19 is changing public behaviour and what that means for pharmacy](#), takes place on **Monday, September 28 from 3:30-5:00pm**. It will feature a presentation from David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data, sharing results from a new CPhA survey examining how consumer trends may have changed during the pandemic and how COVID-19 may shape the future of pharmacy. Specific questions that were included in the survey touch on the role of the profession, perceptions of pharmacists and how patients are currently accessing pharmacy services. David's presentation will be followed by an engaging panel of pharmacists and industry experts to explore the results on a practical level. The entire series of webinars is free and open to all. [Learn more and register](#).

New flu resources available: Webinar recording, video, poster

Getting your flu shot at the pharmacy is going to look a little different this year, but it is more important than ever! CPhA is continuing to update our [website](#) with tools, information and resources to help pharmacists and Canadians prepare for flu season amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The recording of our most recent webinar, *Preparing for Flu Season: Suggested Best Practices for Community Pharmacy*, is now available on the site, as well as a new poster and animated video for patients. Materials are also available in [French](#).

CPhA's COVID-19 web pages are being updated regularly at www.pharmacists.ca/covid19 and www.pharmacists.ca/covid19fr.

Provincial

Ontario expands COVID-19 testing to pharmacies

The Ontario government is [providing people with convenient and timely access](#) to free COVID-19 testing at pharmacies in the province. As of September 25, up to 60 pharmacies in Ontario will begin offering testing by appointment only, with further locations coming online in the coming weeks. This initiative will expand testing capacity well beyond the province's 150 assessment centres. Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford and Christine Elliott, deputy premier and minister of health. "We rely on our pharmacists for our flu shots, prescriptions and important health advice for ourselves and our families. It makes sense to engage them as key partners in delivering more COVID-19 testing," said Premier Ford. "I have to thank Shoppers Drug Mart, Rexall and the independent pharmacies who have stepped up in a big way to help expand testing to more people in the province. With everyone pitching in, we are well on our way to reaching our goal of 50,000 tests a day and stopping the spread of COVID-19." Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) CEO Justin Bates says, "Ontario pharmacy professionals are providing care to patients on the frontlines and continue to step up with solutions to support patients during the pandemic. As we enter the flu season and a potential second wave of the pandemic, pharmacy professionals stand ready to do their part in helping curb the spread of the virus."

National

COVID-19 will keep spreading if behaviours don't change, Tam says

The latest federal modelling on the COVID-19 pandemic shows that in the short-term, Canada's epidemic is set to keep growing, predicting up to 155,795 total cases and 9,300 deaths by October 2, unless Canadians re-adopt the same degree of health precautions they took in the early months of the pandemic, [reports CTV](#). Federal health officials released updated national COVID-19 modelling on September 23, as the surge in new cases continues across several provinces and has prompted renewed anxieties about Canada's ability to stave off a full-blown second wave. There are currently nearly 11,000 active COVID-19 cases in Canada, while another 126,230 patients have recovered. To date, more than 9,200 Canadians have died from the novel coronavirus.

Agreements signed to secure additional vaccine candidate and treatment for COVID-19

The federal government has [signed agreements](#) with Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to secure up to 72 million doses of their COVID-19 adjuvanted recombinant protein-based vaccine candidate. Based on recommendations from the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, the Government of Canada is signing agreements with a number of leading pharmaceutical companies to establish a guaranteed supply base of potential vaccine candidates. Agreements have previously been signed with Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and Novavax, and negotiations continue for access to other leading vaccine candidates. As well, the government signed an agreement with Gilead Sciences and McKesson Canada to secure a supply of up to 150,000 vials of remdesivir, with deliveries beginning this month and continuing into early 2021. Currently, remdesivir is the only known anti-viral drug that has been shown to be effective in treating COVID-19 patients.

Nearly 20% of COVID-19 infections among health care workers by late July

Health care workers in Canada made up about 20% of COVID-19 infections as of late July, a figure that was higher than the global average, [the Canadian Press says](#). In a [report](#) released earlier this month, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) said 19.4% of those who tested positive for the virus as of July 23 were health care workers. A total of 12 health care workers, 9 from Ontario and 3 from Quebec, died from COVID-19, it said. The World Health Organization said in July that health care workers made up 10% of global COVID-19 infections.

Majority of Canadians support wearing masks during COVID-19: survey

A new survey suggests the recent rise in new COVID-19 cases across Canada comes with a similar increase in support for the mandatory wearing of masks in public places, [says the Canadian Press](#). The [online survey](#) conducted by Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies says that 83% of respondents feel governments should order people to wear a mask in all indoor public spaces. That represents a 16% increase from July, before the recent rise in COVID-19 cases sparked concerns that many parts of the country are entering the dreaded second wave of the pandemic.

PHAC names Iain Stewart as new president

On September 21, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau named former National Research Council (NRC) head Iain Stewart the new president of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), [reports the Globe and Mail](#). The move follows the sudden resignation of agency president Tina Namiesniowski on September 18. PHAC has been beset by problems in recent months surrounding key aspects of its response to COVID-19, including weaknesses in its intelligence-gathering and decision-making capacity, which critics have said led the government to underestimate the threat of the virus.

International

Continued dispensing here to stay

Emergency dispensing measures in Australia introduced during the bushfire and COVID-19 crises are set to be extended "for the foreseeable future," according to federal health minister Greg Hunt in an article in [Pharmacy Daily](#). Addressing a meeting of the World Pharmacy Council last week, Hunt praised the efforts of pharmacists across the globe for their efforts to support

communities through the COVID-19 crisis, which he described as “a challenge like no other we have seen.” The commitment to extending continued dispensing follows Hunt’s announcement that the Australian federal government has allocated an additional AUD\$2 billion to ensure the continuation of COVID measures, including the Home Medicines Service and telehealth consultations.

COVID-19 vaccines will be available at US pharmacies

People will be able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine at their local pharmacy once the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves an immunization, the online publication [Very Well Health reports](#). The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued guidance in early September expanding access to COVID-19 vaccine(s) when they are made available. This decision was made possible as part of the [Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness \(PREP\) Act](#), which provides additional protection during a public health emergency. For years, pharmacists have been an integral part in helping administer vaccines to the community, says Mitchel Rotholtz, chief of governance and state affiliates at the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). Because of the PREP Act, pharmacists were also able to administer vaccines for the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

Russia approves first prescription COVID-19 drug for sale in pharmacies

Russia has approved R-Pharm’s Coronavir treatment for outpatients with mild to moderate COVID-19 infections and the antiviral drug could be rolled out to pharmacies in the country as soon as this week, [Reuters reports](#). Coronavir’s approval as a prescription drug follows the green light for another Russian COVID-19 drug, Avifavir, in May. Both are based on favipiravir, which was developed in Japan and is widely used as the basis for viral treatments.

CDC reverses COVID-19 testing guidance again: Exposed without symptoms need test

The Trump administration reversed guidance on COVID-19 testing for a second time, urging those exposed to people with the virus to get tested even if they are not displaying symptoms, [reports Reuters](#). The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sparked widespread outcry among state public health officials and experts in late August when it said that people who do not have symptoms may not need to get tested. Before August 24, the CDC had encouraged testing for all those who were exposed. The latest guidance update effectively reverts the CDC’s testing guidance to what it said before it was altered in late August.

Moderna sees 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine candidate by year end

Moderna says it is on track to produce 20 million doses of its experimental COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the year, while maintaining its goal of readying 500 million to 1 billion doses in 2021, [says Reuters](#). Vaccines and treatments are seen as essential in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shown no signs of slowing down and has killed over 944,000 people worldwide. A handful of vaccines, including those from Pfizer Inc. and AstraZeneca, are also being tested in large studies.

AstraZeneca releases trial blueprints

AstraZeneca revealed details of its large coronavirus vaccine trials, the third in a [wave of rare disclosures](#) by drug companies under pressure to be more transparent about how they are testing products that are the world’s best hope for ending the pandemic, [reports the New York Times](#). Polls are finding Americans are increasingly wary of accepting a coronavirus vaccine, and scientists inside and outside the government are worried that regulators, pressured by the president for results before Election Day on November 3, might release an unproven or unsafe vaccine.

COVID-19 data scandal prompts tweaks to journal’s review process

Just 3 months after retracting a high-profile COVID-19 paper, the *Lancet* announced a new policy that aims to keep flawed studies using “large, real-world datasets” from slipping past peer review again, [Science writes](#). The policy includes stricter standards for the expertise of peer reviewers of such papers and requires that all authors vouch for the validity of their data and detail their data-sharing plans. The journal yanked a study on risks of hydroxychloroquine when its authors could not prove underlying patient data even existed.

More than 150 nations join WHO-led COVID-19 vaccine initiative, but US and China absent

Some 156 nations have joined a global strategy for fair distribution of future vaccines against COVID-19, an alliance led by the World Health Organization (WHO) said, but China and the United States have not signed up, [Reuters reports](#). US President Donald Trump's government has already secured future supplies through bilateral deals, prompting accusations of selfish behaviour to the detriment of poor countries. China is also missing from the list of 64 rich nations who joined the COVAX plan to deliver 2 billion vaccine doses around the world by the end of 2021, prioritizing health care workers and the vulnerable. But alliance officials say dialogue continues with Beijing. Canada is listed among the countries that have officially joined the COVAX Facility.

Belief in conspiracy theories poses barrier to controlling the spread of COVID-19

As scientists around the world race to create a vaccine for the novel coronavirus, some researchers predict that belief in conspiracy theories could hinder the uptake of a safe vaccine once it becomes publicly available, [CTV News says](#). A [new study](#) published in the journal *Social Science & Medicine* found that conspiracy theories regarding COVID-19 have been persistent from March to July and are associated with the reluctance to adopt preventive behaviours, such as mask-wearing and vaccination in the future. "Belief in pandemic conspiracy theories appears to be an obstacle to minimizing the spread of COVID-19," says Dan Romer, research director at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center.

Newsworthy

Experimental drugs for COVID-19 could help someday, but home runs not guaranteed

If the coronavirus vaccines currently being tested don't pan out, don't expect new drugs to fill the gap any time soon, [NPR reports](#). Many drugs are in the works, and those that succeed could play a role in reducing symptoms and sometimes saving lives. But, given the way drugs are developed, it is unlikely that any single medicine will be anywhere as potent against COVID-19 as a successful vaccine. So far, scientists have identified only one kind of drug that has been shown to save lives: steroids.

Worth Repeating

"All of us have the future in our hands in terms of the decisions we're making today. Those decisions that we make today, to say 'no,' to connect in different ways, to keep our gathering sizes small, to ensure that we're not socializing more than absolutely necessary, are going to actually help drive the cases down. It's a sacrifice that we all have to make." — Federal Health Minister Patty Hajdu at a [briefing](#) on updated national COVID-19 modelling on September 22.

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.