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**September 9, 2020**

## **CPhA**

### ***Minister of Health Hon. Patty Hajdu to open tomorrow's webinar: Preparing for Flu Season: Suggested Best Practices for Community Pharmacy***

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, federal Minister of Health, will kick off CPhA's next COVID Conversations webinar with an opening Q&A on **Thursday, September 10** at **1:15pm** EDT (note later start time). 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 continues to promote importance of flu preparedness to avoid "twindemic"***

Canadians are about to face yet another challenge in the COVID-19 pandemic: the arrival of flu season. Hoping to avoid what some have termed a "twindemic" — an influx of people becoming ill as influenza and the new coronavirus circulate at the same time — health experts say it's more important than ever to get the flu shot, [reports CBC](#). About 35% of flu vaccinations in Canada are given by pharmacists each year, says Shelita Dattani, director of practice development with the Canadian Pharmacists Association. She's expecting that as some family practice clinics have cut down on in-person appointments during COVID-19, pharmacists may be giving many more flu shots this year — and they've been preparing for months.

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).

## **National**

### ***Most Canadians confident government will be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine: survey***

Canadians appear to feel confident in the government's ability to acquire and distribute a COVID-19 vaccine when one is made available, according to a [new survey by Nanos Research](#). The survey found that 7 in 10 respondents reported that they are confident (31%) or somewhat confident (43%) that the government has a plan that will keep as many Canadians as possible safe. Just over 2 in 10 are not confident (12%) or somewhat not confident (10%) and 4% said they were unsure.

### ***Hajdu orders a review of pandemic alert system after scientists claim warnings were ignored***

Health Minister Patty Hajdu has ordered an independent review of the Global Public Health Intelligence Network (GPHIN) in response to claims by some scientists that their early warnings about the threat of COVID-19 were ignored or inadequately addressed by senior staff at the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), [CBC says](#). The network, a federal government-run monitoring and analysis unit, alerts senior officials to health risks around the globe by compiling media reports and other

intelligence about outbreaks.

## **International**

### ***APhA calls for priority status for pharmacists in planning for COVID-19 vaccine***

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and 12 other pharmacy organizations [told a special committee](#) of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) that pharmacists should be given tier 1 priority status in the allocation and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine(s). “Pharmacies and pharmacists in all practice settings are essential front-line health care providers and have been providing COVID-19 and related patient care since the coronavirus first appeared in the United States,” the group said. “We are proud of the tremendous critical efforts that our members have undertaken to help our nation respond to the pandemic.”

### ***Prescription for administering the COVID-19 vaccine: Pharmacists fill the gap***

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the [US government recognized](#) pharmacists’ unique position as a frontline provider, trusted community source and convenient point of care—and expanded their role in COVID-19 testing. Now that several COVID-19 vaccines are in stage 3 clinical trials, [states and the federal government](#) are once again turning to pharmacists, as [reported by the National Conference of State Legislatures](#), to aid in the population-wide administration of current routine vaccines and potentially a future COVID-19 vaccine.

### ***During this pandemic, it’s time to expand children’s access to vaccines***

In an [Op Ed published on September 3](#), APhA executive vice-president and CEO Scott Knoer highlighted how the association keeps fighting for pharmacists and their patients during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Knoer says that the association is working to change the hearts and minds of policy makers—and the recent HHS order to expand children’s access to vaccines is proof that that’s happening, despite opposition from several groups in organized medicine.

### ***Irish pharmacists welcome expansion of flu program***

Pharmacists [have welcomed the announcement](#) by Ireland’s Minister for Health that the flu vaccination program will be expanded this year, making the vaccine free to children, as well as everyone in an at-risk group. The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) says that the announcement shows the important role flu vaccination will play in protecting our health as we enter our first flu season while living with COVID-19. IPU secretary general Darragh O’Loughlin says, “The flu led to the hospitalization of over 4000 people in Ireland during the last flu season. That is more than were hospitalized with COVID-19, which should be a reminder of the serious nature of the illness. Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, we have consistently called for a significant investment in this year’s national flu vaccination campaign, to keep people safe from flu and protect our health system from its impact, so we can deal with the continuing impact of COVID-19.”

### ***Pharma companies seek to reassure public about COVID-19 vaccine safety***

In a [tweet](#) the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) welcomed the pledge by a group of 9 leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to only seek approval for COVID-19 vaccines demonstrated to be safe and effective. The pledge is an attempt to provide public reassurance despite the widely held view that the COVID-19 vaccine development process is politically tainted, [STAT says](#). In a statement, the companies pledged to “make the safety and well-being of vaccinated individuals our top priority.” The vaccine developers said they would continue to impose high ethical and scientific standards on the vaccine-testing process, and apply for government authorizations only “after demonstrating safety and efficacy through a Phase 3 clinical study.”

### ***AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine study put on hold due to suspected adverse reaction in participant in the UK***

A large phase 3 study testing a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford at dozens of sites across the US has been put on hold due to a suspected serious adverse reaction in a participant in the United Kingdom, [reports STAT](#). A spokesperson for AstraZeneca said in a statement that the company’s “standard review process triggered a pause to vaccination to allow review of safety data.”

### ***NIH panel refutes FDA's claims of the benefits of coronavirus plasma treatment***

A panel of experts convened by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) says there is “insufficient data” to show convalescent plasma works against COVID-19, refuting claims made by US President Donald Trump and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner Stephen Hahn, [CNBC says](#). The panel reviewed available data on the treatment and found nothing from “well-controlled, adequately powered randomized clinical trials that demonstrate the efficacy and safety of convalescent plasma” for treating COVID-19. It also said “there was no difference in 7-day survival” for patients, contradicting Hahn.

### ***EU regulators begin fast review of dexamethasone for COVID-19***

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has begun an accelerated review of dexamethasone for treating hospitalized COVID-19 patients, [Pharmaphorum reports](#). Dexamethasone is a generic steroid that has been repurposed and shown to alleviate the severe respiratory complications seen with the disease. The hope is that dexamethasone will be more affordable than remdesivir, which costs around \$3,120 for a course. The filing comes for the formulation known as Dexamethasone Taw, which comes from Taw Pharma, a little-known company with no public website.

### ***From shipping containers to security concerns, a COVID-19 vaccine supply chain takes shape***

A vast, behind-the-scenes global network is gearing up to quickly transport huge numbers of COVID-19 vaccines, [STAT explains](#). Manufacturers of temperature-controlled containers are squeezing more out of their production plants. Vaccine makers are busy modelling transportation routes and storage conditions in many countries. Wholesalers are lining up warehouse space and trucks. And freight forwarders and airport managers are expanding security for what will immediately become the world's hottest commodity.

## **Newsworthy**

### ***Let's get real. No vaccine will work as if by magic, returning us to 'normal'***

At the end of any summer we brace ourselves—for back to school, returning to work and even for Christmas plans. But this year, the reality bump is like no other. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reverberate globally, there is no doubt that we must be ready to face a long road ahead, certainly beyond the end of this year, [reports The Guardian](#). The fact that a vaccine, alongside effective treatments, is the only true exit strategy remains unchanged. The speed and scale of vaccine development have been remarkable but it's important to avoid false hope.

## **Worth Repeating**

“Although Canada is striving to maintain a slow burn, the average daily case count has been increasing in recent days. This is concerning and I want to underscore that when cases occur, including in schools, it's a reflection of what's happening in the community.” — Teresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, [warning](#) that Canadians will have to stay vigilant to keep COVID-19 out of schools.

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.

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