



The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

CPhA on ivermectin: No benefit in treating COVID-19

As the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic escalates, attention has once again been focused on possible off-label treatments that could prevent or mitigate the disease—in this case, the drug ivermectin. CPhA [continues to stress](#) that the most effective intervention in preventing COVID-19 is immunization, and that all Health Canada–approved vaccines provide a high level of protection. Marketed as a drug to treat a number of parasitic diseases in humans, ivermectin has been studied and has failed to show a benefit in the treatment of people with COVID-19. Also used as a veterinary drug, this medication has been accessed through veterinary and livestock medication distribution channels. Given the drug's serious side effects at higher doses, this usage has the potential to cause significant health risks. Increased demand driven by inappropriate use of ivermectin has led to a limited supply in Canada for patients who need it to effectively treat indicated conditions.

Upcoming COVID Conversations webinar: Virulent variants, booster vaccines and the next phase in the COVID-19 pandemic

The emergence of new variants of concern has heralded a new phase in the COVID-19 pandemic. As we enter the fourth wave, attention is now drawn toward the need for some to receive a third vaccine dose and for the young to be vaccinated. [Join us on Monday, September 13 from 1:00–2:30 p.m. ET](#) as experts discuss the current evidence around vaccines, highlighting the role that pharmacists and other health-care providers play in helping manage a

fourth wave. We will discuss particularly vulnerable patient populations for whom a third vaccine dose is appropriate as well as special considerations for vaccinating our young patients. As the fall is the time to think about influenza and pneumococcus immunization, we will also discuss how pharmacists can support their patients to ensure they are protected. Register [here](#).

Provincial

Ray Joubert: A “titan of pharmacy”

Ray Joubert, described as [a “titan of pharmacy”](#) and the former registrar of the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals, [died on August 31](#). Ray was born in Regina and raised in Montmartre, Saskatchewan. He attended the University of Saskatchewan, earning his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy in 1974. He soon discovered his passion for regulatory pharmacy, devoting over 40 years to the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals for the advancement of pharmacy provincially, nationally and internationally. Throughout his distinguished career, he received numerous awards, including selection as one of CPhA’s 100 Centennial Pharmacists in 2007. Joubert was recognized and will be remembered for his contribution to pharmacy and Canadian society through his leadership and the positive profile he brought to the profession.

National

To avoid 15 000 daily COVID-19 cases, Canada urged to increase vaccination rates, uphold public health measures

Increasing vaccination rates among young people and upholding public health measures like masking and physical distancing could help Canada avoid record numbers of daily COVID-19 cases in the fall, [according to the Globe and Mail](#). Projections by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) show that if the current rate of COVID-19 transmission holds, the country could find itself reporting as many as 15 000 new daily cases by the middle of September. But decreasing spread by 25% could cause the country’s case numbers to plateau, then decrease later in the month. At a September 3 news conference where the new modelling was released, Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam urged Canadians, vaccinated or not, to continue masking and distancing. In her first public address since the start of the federal election, she asked those who haven’t received their shots to get them as quickly as possible—ideally by the end of Labour Day weekend—to stifle the virus. “This is a crucial moment,” she said.

Poll: majority of Canadians favour vaccine passport for non-essential places

A new poll suggests 8 out of 10 Canadians backed the notion of a COVID-19 vaccine passport in the days leading up to last week’s rollout of a certificate system in Quebec and news that Ontario would soon follow suit, [according to the Canadian Press](#). The poll also suggests Canadians are largely split on whether the reopening of in-person learning at elementary and secondary schools changed any concerns they had about the Delta variant. The latest Leger poll reports 56% of Canadian respondents said they “strongly support” provincial vaccine passports for

indoor places including bars, restaurants, gyms, concert halls and festivals when asked last week, while another 25% said they “somewhat support” the measure.

Health workforce in Canada: Highlights of the impact of COVID-19

In 2020, Canada saw the lowest increase in the supply of pharmacists in the past 5 years, according to [new data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information \(CIHI\)](#) demonstrating the pandemic’s affects on Canada’s health workforce. While the overall supply of pharmacists increased by about 8% between 2016 and 2020, Canada saw a rise of only 0.8% in 2020 compared with 2% in 2019. CIHI also [produced a table](#) highlighting the ability of pharmacists and other health-care workers to administer COVID-19 tests, vaccinations or both across the provinces and territories.

International

Australia: Guild welcomes approval of Moderna vaccine for all adolescents and adults

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia [has welcomed the decision](#) by the Therapeutic Goods Administration to approve the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for all adolescents and adults. The national president of the guild, Trent Twomey, said the move, which extends availability to people aged 12 and above, will help increase community coverage against the virus. “Community pharmacies will be administering the Moderna vaccine as soon as supplies are available and extending the age-group eligibility is a common sense move to ensure more people are protected. The rate that patients are flocking to community pharmacies to have their vaccinations has highlighted the pivotal role community pharmacists are playing in the campaign to maximise vaccination uptake,” he said. The accessibility of these pharmacies and the trust that people have in their pharmacists and their staff are key to the success of including pharmacies in the rollout, he added.

Australia: Pharmacists report rise in customers refusing to disclose what ivermectin prescription is for

Australian pharmacists have reported an increasing number of people arriving with prescriptions for the drug ivermectin but refusing to say what it will be used for, [the Guardian says](#). The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) said its members were encountering resistance from some customers when asked why they were seeking ivermectin. “PSA is aware that some pharmacists have experienced an increase in presentations of prescriptions for ivermectin, including where the patient is unwilling or unable to discuss what they are being used for,” a PSA spokesperson said. The Therapeutic Goods Administration said there had been a shortage of Stromectol 3 mg ivermectin tablets in August. The drug is typically used in humans for treating river blindness, scabies and roundworm infections, but has increasingly been sought as a treatment for COVID-19, despite not being approved for that use in Australia.

Australia: Australian Logistics Council partners with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia on COVID-19 vaccination program

On September 7, the Australian Logistics Council (ALC) and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia [announced](#) a groundbreaking industry association partnership, providing ALC members access to the Guild Corporate COVID-19 vaccination program. The program allows for immediate access to vaccinations for ALC member companies and their workforces through up to 3500 pharmacy locations across Australia. The program provides another pathway for essential freight and supply chain workers to get vaccinated at a place and time convenient to them. The agreement is the first of its kind for industry associations partnering with the Pharmacy Guild. ALC CEO Brad Williams welcomed the partnership, saying it adds another option for ALC member companies in their efforts to get their workforces vaccinated.

Ireland: More than 250 000 COVID-19 vaccines have now been administered at pharmacies

More than 250 000 COVID-19 vaccines have now been administered at pharmacies across Ireland, according to new figures from the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU). As [reported by the Irish Examiner](#), the IPU said more than 170 000 people between the ages of 20 and 39 and more than 50 000 aged 12 to 19 had received a vaccine in a pharmacy to date. With almost 1000 Irish pharmacies currently offering the Pfizer vaccine, the IPU has said the rollout will continue for people over the age of 12 over the coming weeks. IPU president Dermot Twomey said the vaccination program in pharmacies had been of “immense value” to communities around the country and the uptake and demand for vaccines amongst younger cohorts has been “exceptional.”

US: CVS is battling a \$45 billion crime spree

CVS and other retailers are spending millions a year to battle organized crime rings that steal from their stores in bulk and then peddle the goods online, often on Amazon’s retail platform, [according to MarketWatch](#). In the case of CVS, a network of organized professionals, known as boosters, have been responsible for stealing almost \$50 million in products over 5 years from dozens of stores in Northern California. It is a situation that has been supercharged by the pandemic and the rapid growth of online commerce that has accompanied it.

In-Depth

From mu to C.1.2, here are the latest coronavirus variants scientists are watching closely

Scientists have warned the coronavirus will keep evolving as it spreads around the world, and there are now multiple new variants being watched closely by global research teams. [CBC explains](#) why these new variants matter and what they are capable of.

Community pharmacies stepped up during COVID-19—and changed for good

While the perception of pharmacies as a commodity—and pharmacists as shufflers of pills from the big bottle to the little bottle—has for decades remained largely unchanged, the landscape has changed in recent years, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. Now, they’re a central tool for removing barriers to health care. [Wired looks at](#) how far US pharmacies have come.

Worth Repeating

“I think this virus is here to stay with us and it will evolve like influenza pandemic viruses, it will evolve to become one of the other viruses that affects us.” — Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization’s Health Emergencies Program, [comments](#) as the coronavirus continues to mutate in unvaccinated countries across the world and previous hopes of eradicating it diminish.

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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