



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association

Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

Resources for National Immunization Awareness Month

August is [National Immunization Awareness Month](#) in Canada! From flu shots to routine immunizations and travel vaccines, [pharmacy professionals across Canada offer convenient access](#) to a broad range of vaccines and injections. For a range of immunization-related resources, check out our [Resource Round-up: Childhood vaccination](#), which includes a series of resources on the CARD (comfort, ask, relax, distract) system that can help you improve the vaccination experience for patients of all ages. For National Immunization Awareness Week in April, CPhA caught up with Canadian pharmacists [Jaelee Guenther](#), [Bob Mattice](#), [Molly Yang](#) and [Ajit Johal](#) to hear about their practices and the important role pharmacists play in vaccinating their communities.

Apply for AFPC's advanced primary care pharmacist training program

As scope of practice expands, the more opportunities there are for pharmacists in primary care. The new Advanced Primary Care Pharmacist Training Program from the Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada (AFPC) can help prepare you with skills and confidence to perform to the full extent of your scope of practice. The program offers a combination of online and in-person

training over 20 weeks from October 2023 to February 2024 as part of a national initiative to accelerate transformative change in the way primary care practitioners work together. Space is limited to 15 pharmacists across Canada. Visit [AFPC's website](#) for more information and to submit your application by August 18.

Solu-Cortef shortages: Information for pharmacy professionals

Health Canada is currently managing a shortage of Solu-Cortef (hydrocortisone injection). Pfizer is the sole supplier of hydrocortisone injection on the Canadian market and is currently reporting shortages for all 4 strengths. Health Canada has classified it as a Tier 3 shortage—those that have the greatest potential impact on Canada's drug supply and health-care system. Check out our [resource page](#) for more information about the shortage for pharmacy professionals, including a [resource](#) developed in collaboration with medSask that provides guidance, conservation strategies and information related to use in adrenal insufficiency. The resources are also available in [French](#).

Pharmacy on the front lines

New pharmacy opens in Crystal Beach, ON, filling pharmacy care gap

It was a trip to Crystal Beach, Ontario, that inspired Sanjay Patel to open a pharmacy on Rebstock Road, [the Fort Erie Post reports](#). Patel liked what he saw in the Fort Erie community and chatted with some of the locals. "When we talked to people, they told us there were no other pharmacies here," Sanjay said, making Crystal Beach the perfect place to set up shop as a pharmacist. Pharmasave Crystal Beach Pharmacy opened on July 17 and so far, Patel said people have been very welcoming. "The business is growing fast," Patel said. "A lot of people have been coming in, and even if they don't buy something, they ask lots of questions and look around to see everything we have to offer."

National

Surgery backlogs, staff shortages, no family doctor: New report highlights Canada's health care crisis

A new report highlights Canada's major drop in surgeries during the early years of the pandemic, but those pains were felt unequally across the country's patchwork provincial health-care systems—with the largest decrease in procedures seen in Newfoundland and Labrador, [CBC News reports](#). The findings were released on August 2 by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), an independent organization which compiles and analyzes health system data. The CIHI team found roughly 743 000 fewer surgeries were performed in Canada during the first 2 and a half years of the pandemic—a drop of about 13% compared to 2019. Despite the drop in surgeries, overtime hours in Canada's public hospitals from 2020 to 2021 increased by 15% over the previous year—a “stark example” of the pressure COVID-19 put on health-care workers, the CIHI report noted. The findings also shone a spotlight on other health-care issues, including staff shortages and burnout, levels of access to personal health information, and the roughly 1 in 10 Canadians who say they don't have a regular health-care provider.

'Poison in every puff': Canada becomes 1st country to have individual cigarette warnings

“Poison in every puff.” Those words and others will eventually appear on every individual cigarette in Canada given that as of August 1, a new set of Health Canada regulations requiring warning labels on individual cigarettes came into effect, [Global News reports](#). By doing so, Canada is the first country in the world with such a policy. Manufacturers now have until the end of July 2024 to ensure the warnings are on all king-size cigarettes sold, followed by regular-size cigarettes and little cigars with tipping paper and tubes by the end of April 2025. The wording will be written in English and French on the paper around the filter. Blunt statements, including “Tobacco smoke harms children” and “Cigarettes cause cancer,” will be among the first 6 messages to appear. A second set of 6 is expected to be printed on cigarettes in 2026.

International

US: APhA applauds legislation ensuring seniors' access to pharmacist care and services

Last week, Senator Mark Warner and Senator John Thune introduced the *Equitable Community Access to Pharmacist Services Act* ensuring Medicare beneficiaries can continue to receive prompt care and services from pharmacists to prevent, diagnose, and treat common infectious diseases. The legislation will establish direct Medicare reimbursement for essential pharmacist services for COVID-19, influenza, RSV and strep throat. The bill follows legislation introduced in the US House of Representatives in March 2023 recognizing the urgent need to ensure seniors in rural and underserved communities maintain access to pharmacist care. “In many rural communities, pharmacists are the only accessible health-care provider and play a critical role in delivering patient services,” Michael D. Hogue, the executive vice-president and CEO of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), said [in a news release welcoming the legislation](#). “This bill not only continues that access but will also help improve patient outcomes and reduce hospitalizations and remove unnecessary costs throughout the health care system.”

US: Walgreens is now offering RSV vaccines for older adults

Walgreens is now offering the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine for older adults nationwide, [CNBC reports](#). People aged 60 and older can schedule an appointment through the Walgreens app, website, by phone or by visiting their local pharmacy, the pharmacy chain said on August 1. This is the first RSV season where older adults have the option to get vaccinated against the virus. The Food and Drug Administration approved the first RSV vaccines, made by Pfizer and GSK, last spring. Walgreens is offering both Pfizer’s and GSK’s shots, which are administered as a single dose. The RSV vaccines are now available in most states and appointments will be added on a rolling basis over the next 2 weeks as more pharmacies receive the shots, according to Walgreens.

Australia: NSW’s UTI pharmacy trial now running statewide

As of July 31, thousands of patients in New South Wales now have timely access to assessment and treatment for urinary tract infections (UTIs) at almost 1000 participating pharmacies across the state, [the Australian Journal of Pharmacy reports](#) (subscription access only). The NSW government’s AUD\$3 million (the equivalent of CAD\$2.6 million) statewide community pharmacy prescribing trial is expanding after a successful pilot, launched in May, saw 94 participating pharmacies provide nearly 900 consultations

delivered in pharmacy settings. Dr. Kerry Chant, NSW's chief public health officer, said the pilot demonstrated there is a need, particularly in regional areas, for innovative models of care. As part of the clinical trial, the NSW government is covering the cost of the AUD\$20 (the equivalent of CAD\$17.43) consultation fee for patients seeking treatment through a participating pharmacy, meaning the only out-of-pocket costs for patients seeking treatment will be for the medication they need.

In Depth

Canada is recommending COVID-19 boosters this fall. Who really needs one?

Canada's vaccine advisors are recommending a COVID-19 booster dose of yet another reformulated vaccine this fall. It may prove a tough sell. With uptake diminishing, dose after dose, COVID-19 vaccines may be approaching "sort of an acceptability settling point," according to Dr. Matthew Tunis, an immunologist and the executive secretary to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. [The National Post explains.](#)

Worth Repeating

"We know from talking to patients at our counter every day that this pilot will be life-changing for so many people . . . Pharmacists are highly trained, highly qualified health-care professionals accessible right in your communities. And we're pleased pharmacists will be able to offer even more of the services they're already trained to provide." —Anne Marie Picone, the interim executive director of the New Brunswick Pharmacists' Association, [on the launch of the province's Pharmacist Care Clinic pilot project](#), which began on August 1

This weekly update is compiled by the Canadian Pharmacists Association. While we aim to ensure all information contained in this update is accurate, CPhA does not take responsibility for the content provided by other organizations and sources.