



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association
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pharmaciens
du Canada

The Weekly

Bringing the world of pharmacy together

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CPhA

Christina Tulk: At the helm

When Christina Tulk took over as chair of CPhA in November 2020, the world was, as she puts it, “knee deep in COVID.” “It’s been a bit wild,” said Tulk in a profile in the [MUN Gazette](#). “The pandemic has taken a horrible toll on many, many people, with so many unexpected deaths, so much illness and mental stress.” Tulk says her education at Memorial’s School of Pharmacy not only prepared her for pharmacy practice in good times and bad, it also prepared her for the leadership and advocacy role she’s taken on with her national professional association.

Practice tool: COVID-19 Tests in Canada

Testing for COVID-19 supports public health initiatives that are intended to slow the spread of COVID-19 and aids in ongoing vaccination efforts. CPhA has created a practice tool to help explain approved COVID-19 testing methods in Canada. The tool is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

Updated chart: Pharmacy involvement in COVID-19 vaccination

As COVID-19 vaccination rollouts continue, CPhA is making bi-weekly updates to our Pharmacy Involvement in COVID Vaccination map, staying on top of the role pharmacists are playing in the vaccination effort. The graphic is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

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

Provincial

Change in AstraZeneca interval wait times must include ramp up of vaccine supply

Justin Bates, chief executive officer of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA), says that while his association welcomes the news that recipients of the AstraZeneca vaccine will have the option of getting their second doses sooner, the change needs to be accompanied by a ramp up of vaccine supply, he [told the Toronto Star](#). “If we don’t have a corresponding increase in supply, we’re going to be challenged. If people select to get an mRNA vaccine, we need to see an increase in pharmacies’ supply for Pfizer and Moderna,” he said. “And we need to make sure we get the AstraZeneca supply into the pharmacies so that we can meet that 8-week eligibility mark.”

Shoppers Drug Mart steps up with UBC, BCCSU to improve addiction treatment and care

Shoppers Drug Mart (SDM) is [stepping up to improve addiction treatment and care](#) for all Canadians by supporting pharmacist training and education led by the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU). A \$2 million gift from SDM to the University of British Columbia (UBC) will establish the Shoppers Drug Mart Addiction Pharmacy Fellowship, the first of its kind in Canada, and support the development of pharmacist-focused addiction treatment education at the BCCSU. Pharmacists can be trained to play a critical role in providing health care for Canadians who use substances or have a substance-use disorder. Through this philanthropic investment, SDM is helping to ensure pharmacists are better trained to support prevention, screening and access to life-saving addiction medications.

BC expands PharmaCare coverage to include life-changing diabetes monitor

British Columbians with diabetes will now be able to claim coverage of a life-changing piece of medical technology through the province’s PharmaCare program, [Global News reports](#). Health Minister Adrian Dix announced last week that the program would cover the Dexcom G6 continuous glucose monitor. The tool monitors diabetics’ blood sugar levels in real-time through a sensor attached to the skin and transmits the information to an app. It is also capable of sending push notifications if a person’s blood sugar levels rise too high or drop too low, potentially putting them in danger. The province estimates access to the device will help about 20,000 people in each of the first 3 years.

National

Canada to receive 9.5M vaccine doses this week thanks to influx of Moderna shots

Canada is poised to receive around 9.5 million COVID-19 vaccine doses this week thanks to a massive influx of shots from Moderna, [according to the Canadian Press](#). The federal government says the Massachusetts-based pharmaceutical firm will deliver a total of 7.1 million doses in 2 separate shipments this week. The first shipment of 2.9 million doses is scheduled to arrive and

be sent to the provinces in the middle of the week. The remaining 4.2 million will arrive later in the week, but won't be sent to provinces and territories until next week. Another 2.4 million doses are also due to come from Pfizer. The shipments expected over the next 7 days will more than double the number of shots Moderna has sent Canada's way. The company had only delivered 6.2 million by the end of last week, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

First batch of J&J COVID vaccines won't be released in Canada

More than 300,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) single-shot COVID-19 vaccine will not be released for use in Canada, [reports the Canadian Press](#). The vaccines were quarantined in April before they were distributed to the provinces because Health Canada was informed the drug substance in them was manufactured at the Emergent BioSolutions facility in Baltimore, MD, where there have been quality control issues. J&J had to throw out more than 15 million doses of vaccine made at the plant in early April after it was discovered workers had mixed up the formula with the one for the AstraZeneca vaccine, which was also being made there. Health Canada says the substance in the 310,000 Canadian doses was manufactured at the same time as those contaminated ones and it can't determine if they meet Canada's standards.

Canadian drug companies want new pricing regs delayed again until after pandemic

Almost 3 dozen Canadian pharmaceutical companies made a direct appeal to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last month to delay the new drug pricing regulations for a third time, [reports the Canadian Press](#). The companies, including all 4 of the drugmakers behind the COVID-19 vaccines being used in Canada now, want more time, and less pandemic distraction, to try to make their case to the Liberals that the regulations will do more harm than good. Executives from 34 drug companies and industry associations signed a letter to Trudeau on May 18, asking that the new regulations not come into force on July 1 as planned. The regulations will make major changes to how the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) ensures drug prices for medications still under patent protection, and therefore without competition, aren't excessive. They adjust which countries are used for comparison-price purposes, introduce new economic factors to help determine if a price is excessive and allow the PMPRB access to the negotiated price rebates drug companies make with provincial governments.

International

US chains expand vaccination hours during "National Month of Action"

As the US looks to meet President Biden's goal of getting one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in 70% of Americans by July 4, pharmacy chains are expanding their vaccination hours to make the vaccines more accessible, [according to Drug Store News](#). Rite Aid and Walgreens unveiled expanded hours on the remaining Fridays in June to make getting vaccinated easier. At Rite Aid, the chain is launching "Night Shots," extending vaccinating hours until midnight at more than 200 locations every Friday in June, and 27 locations will be administering COVID-19 vaccines for the entire 24-hour day. For both events, vaccinations will be offered on a walk-in basis. Walgreens also is expanding the hours of operation at 4,000 of its locations on Fridays to accommodate

more walk-in vaccinations. The company noted that its more than 400 24-hour pharmacy locations are offering vaccinations on a walk-in basis throughout their hours of operation. These changes come as the Biden administration's July 4 goal begins to come up against a downward trend in demand — and big disparities in vaccination rates from state to state. On June 10, the [Associated Press reported](#) that vaccination rates nationwide have slowed from almost 2 million people per day 2 months ago to 400,000 now, with some 15.5 million people needing to receive a vaccine dose in the next month to meet the 70% target.

Novavax: Large study finds COVID-19 shot about 90% effective

On June 14 vaccine maker Novavax said that a large, late-stage study in the US and Mexico has shown that its shot was highly effective against COVID-19 and also protected against variants, [reports the Associated Press](#). The vaccine was about 90% effective overall, and preliminary data showed it was safe, the company said. While demand for COVID-19 shots in the US has dropped dramatically, the need for more vaccines around the world remains critical. The Novavax vaccine, which is easy to store and transport, is expected to play an important role in boosting vaccine supplies in the developing world.

UK PM Johnson announces 4-week delay to COVID lockdown easing in England

Boris Johnson has halted the final easing of lockdown restrictions in England and ordered a 4-week delay to speed up the vaccination program, but signalled afterwards he would not tolerate any further suspension, [according to the Guardian](#). The prime minister said July 19 was a “terminus date” and that all restrictions on social contact could be lifted, barring the emergence of a game-changing new variant. The chief medical officer for England, Chris Whitty, suggested that within 4 weeks the additional jabs would offer sufficient protection to halt a surge in hospitalizations and said there would come a point where the country would be able to live with the virus in relative normality.

RPS introduces Inclusion and Wellbeing Pledge

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has developed the [RPS Inclusion and Wellbeing Pledge](#) in consultation with the profession, listening to pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and the wider pharmacy teams about the issues that affect them, the challenges they face, and what needs to change. A series of focus groups, open to members and non-members, as well as its [Action in Belonging, Culture and Diversity](#) (ABCD) and [Workforce Wellbeing](#) Action Groups, highlight key issues such as culture, leadership, working practices and support. The RPS also heard from stakeholders that will be crucial in making change happen, bringing together more than 20 organizations from across the profession including unions, employers, the NHS, regulators, pharmacy schools and students. According to RPS, the pledge applies to all who work in pharmacy, stating that “Pharmacy teams are made up of different members, including pharmacy technicians and support staff. All members of the pharmacy team play an important role, and we need to ensure everyone feels welcome regardless of role and background.”

A look at up-and-coming pharmacy leaders: Adam Da Costa Gomes

Adam Da Costa Gomes is intrigued by medications and their ability to make positive change in the body and mind. Graduating as a member of St. Michael's College, the recent University of Toronto Student Leadership Award winner believes high-quality academics mixed with a steady dose of extracurricular activities to boost equality on campus was the right prescription for success, he said in a profile in the [U of T News](#). He sits on the Faculty of Arts & Science Mental Health Initiatives Committee and is a cofounding and current executive member of SMCInclusive, the pro-LGBTQ2S+ student club at the college. Next up for Adam: a summer stint as a pharmacy assistant at a chronic care specialty pharmacy, and then in September he begins his PharmD program at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy.

Worth repeating

"Everybody pulled together and said, 'Let's just get as many people vaccinated as fast as we can.' [There was] better collaboration between all sectors — in the health sector, public health, clinical care, pharmacies, primary care. Everybody. Everybody's doing their bit. We found a way to get it done." — Dr. Ross Upshur, with the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health, on how [Canada rose to the top](#) in administering first doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

This weekly COVID-19 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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