Cross-Canada Updates

Stronger together

Canada's pharmacy associations work together on key, critical issues affecting the profession in support of strong associations, exceptional pharmacists and healthy Canadians. This *CPJ* feature highlights some of the work happening at pharmacy associations across the country. In this month's issue, many of our Organizational Members have focused on opioid/addiction initiatives for their associations.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Opioids/Addictions

Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA) | rxa.ca

In 2016, RxA worked with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services to have naloxone kits distributed through pharmacies to Albertans. Since then, over 27,000 Take Home Naloxone Kits have been dispensed to mitigate the opioid crisis. Over 1400 pharmacies in Alberta participate in the program. Kits are provided anonymously and free of charge to anyone at risk of opioid overdose. Pharmacist participation in the program is supported by an online learning module at RxA.ca. RxA has offered both in-person and online courses regarding opioids and harm reduction in the past and is working to develop more programs like these for our members. Future courses will cover topics such as opioid pharmacology, harm reduction, ethics, stigma, collaboration, patient experience and communication. Albertans can find a Take Home Naloxone Kit by searching the interactive map at www.albertahealth-services.ca.

Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP) | aqpp.qc.ca

In April, the Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP) met with the Prime Minister's Office, Members of Parliament and the Official Opposition's Office to raise awareness of pharmacy's demands for granting the profession the status of medical practitioner nationwide. Giving pharmacists the status of medical practitioner would provide them with the opportunity to reduce narcotic doses, replace long-acting drugs with short-acting drugs and substitute one opiate for another. In this regard, Health Canada should, as a part of its current review, bring forward amendments to the Narcotic Control Regulations, Benzodiazepines and Other Targeted Substances Regulations and the Food and Drugs Regulations—Part G Controlled Drugs. The opioid crisis is an important issue for Canadians. The AQPP believes pharmacists can do more than deliver generic handouts at the time of sale and an opioid warning sticker with each prescription.

New Brunswick Pharmacists' Association (NBPA) | nbpharma.ca

New Brunswick pharmacists continue to push the provincial government for improvements to its Drug Information System and a more comprehensive Prescription Monitoring Program. The New Brunswick Pharmacists Association (NBPA) participated in the provincial government's recent consultations on the Prescription Monitoring Act and continue to raise the topic with elected officials. Unveiled in 2016, the Drug Information System (DIS) is an important tool that helps prevent the misuse of certain prescription drugs; however, the system is not integrated with the software used by retail pharmacies, unlike in other Atlantic provinces. The current DIS does not provide pharmacists with important alerts that identify drug interactions and dosage issues. The NBPA will continue to advocate for improvements to this important tool.

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Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia (PANS) | pans.ns.ca

The Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia (PANS) continues to work with its partners to combat the growing opioid problem facing our province. In almost every community in Nova Scotia, pharmacies have been providing patients with naloxone kits. Along with the kits, patients receive training on how to recognize an opioid overdose, what to do in the case of an overdose and the proper use of the kit. The Nova Scotia Take Home Naloxone Program is completely anonymous and fully funded by the province of Nova Scotia. Additionally, PANS has partnered with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Halifax Regional Police in a biannual public awareness campaign, #keepthemsafe, on the importance of the proper disposal of medications through PANS's Medication Disposal Program.

Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS) | skpharmacists.ca

The Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan (PAS) continues to collaborate with our partners, provincial and national, to address the opioid crisis in our province. PAS conducted an online survey with our members around opioids, including questions on what tools frontline pharmacists need and what gaps they feel exist in their training and knowledge. The survey is part of PAS's support strategy for members around opioids. Currently, PAS has a Naloxone Registry available to the public that lists pharmacies in Saskatchewan carrying naloxone kits. This is part of an effort to increase public awareness of the accessibility, training and knowledge pharmacists can provide to the public around naloxone. For more information, please visit www.skpharmacists.ca/patients/naloxone.

Prince Edward Island Pharmacists Association (PEIPhA) | peipharm.info

The Prince Edward Island Pharmacists Association (PEIPhA) was involved in the development of the PEI Action Plan to Prevent and Mitigate Opioid Overdoses and Deaths. The number of accidental apparent opioid-related deaths in Prince Edward Island (PEI) remains relatively low, with 6 recorded in 2016 and 5 in 2017. The data for 2018 are as yet unavailable, but current information estimates 2.6 deaths per 100,000 (national average 11.8 per 100,000). During PAM2019, the PEIPhA provided a naloxone administration training and education event for University of PEI students on campus. The event was featured on a local CBC TV news segment, raising awareness of the role of pharmacists in public education. Naloxone is available through pharmacies for purchase, while the province provides naloxone free of charge through designated government sites.

Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada (AFPC) | afpc.info

The Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada (AFPC) is the national voice for academic pharmacy, providing leadership and resources for faculty members across Canada. About 1300 new pharmacists graduate from the 10 universities each year. A key AFPC initiative is addressing the opioid crisis in Canada. The AFPC Opioid Working Group conducted an environmental scan and developed recommendations for pharmacy education and competencies for pharmacists in pain management, overdose and opioid use disorder. Funded by Health Canada, AFPC is partnering with the national associations for schools of nursing and social work to develop guidelines and resources to better prepare future pharmacists, nurses and social workers to provide care in the areas of health promotion, prevention, treatment and harm reduction related to substance use.

Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) | pharmacists.ca

The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) remains committed to national leadership on the opioid crisis in Canada. Pharmacists across the country are on the front lines of this issue and are often the first health care providers to notice a prescription drug problem in a patient. This is why CPhA continues to advocate for a federal regulatory change that would allow pharmacists to prescribe, adapt and taper opioid prescriptions for their patients. Our website offers a range of tools and resources to help pharmacists support their patients. Members can also access 2 webinar recordings, "Naloxone for Opioid Overdose: What Pharmacists Need to Know" and "An Interprofessional Approach to Treating Patients with Opioid Use Disorder," and a 1-hour members-only continuing education unit on how to be an opioid steward. In case you missed it, the January/February issue of *CPJ* featured a pharmacist

framework for the implementation of the Canadian Guideline for Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain. Visit www.pharmacists.ca/opioids for more information.

Other Highlights

Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) | panl.net

The annual conference of the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) is taking place in St. John's, NL, September 21-22. This year's conference will once again offer delegates many exciting networking opportunities, as well as a comprehensive Continuing Education program. The Saturday evening Awards Gala will celebrate the contributions and successes of pharmacists and students, including this year's Community and Hospital Pharmacists of the Year. Don't miss out! Early bird registration rates are available until July 27, 2019. Visit panl.net for more details and to register today.

Pharmacists Manitoba | pharmacistsmb.ca

With 1500+ pharmacists and 400+ pharmacies across Manitoba, we are the most accessible part of the public health care system and, in some rural and remote communities, the only part. Pharmacists want to work with the provincial government to achieve greater transparency, better value and improved sustainability. Health Minister Cameron Friesen stated in his opening remarks at our conference, "For far too long, the relationship between the Manitoba government and pharmacists has revolved around the provincial drug plan and nothing else. This is an outdated approach that, much like the health care system itself, needs to be transformed and modernized." The minister's quote shows that our message has been received and we are optimistic that change will come. If we are going to effect practice change and the reimbursement model in Manitoba, we need the profession to stand behind Pharmacists Manitoba and support our efforts.