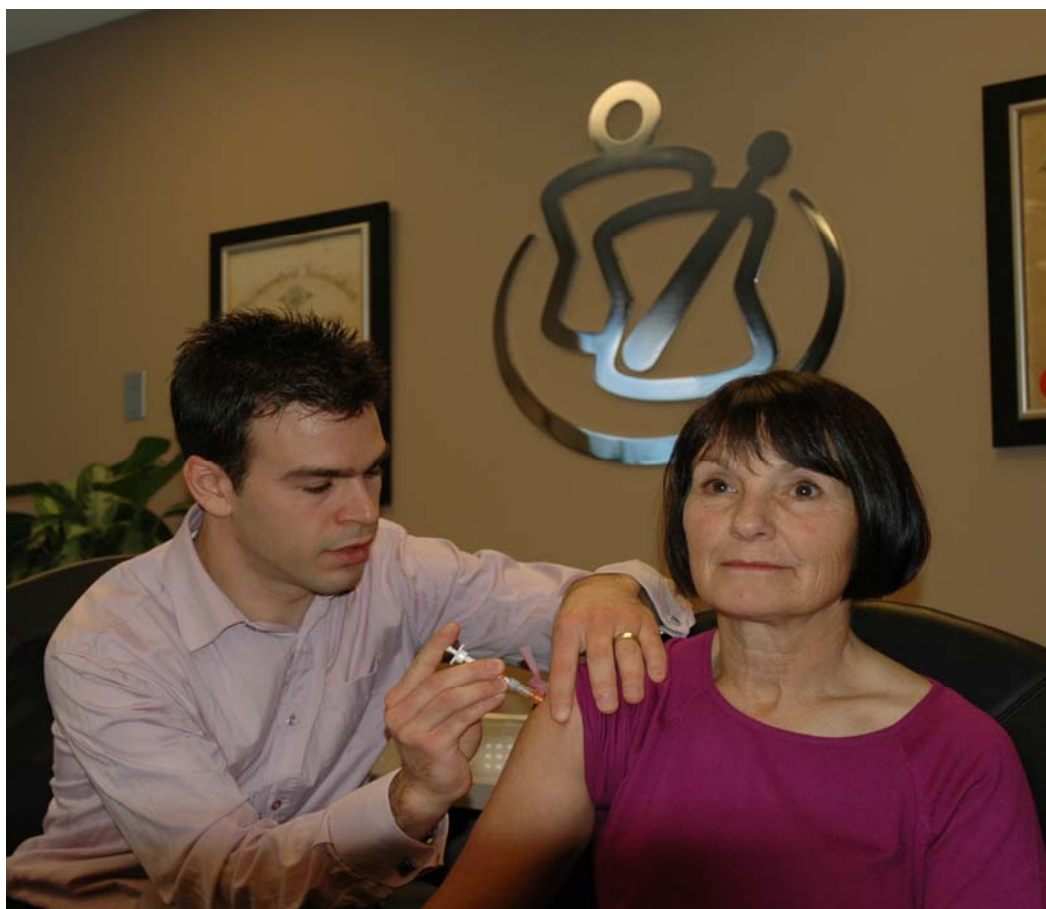




British Columbians get flu shots from pharmacists



BCPhA CEO Marnie Mitchell gets a flu shot from pharmacist David Massaro

Thousands of B.C. residents are receiving injections from pharmacists for the first time. Patients now have the convenient new option of receiving H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccinations from pharmacists authorized to give injections.

“The ability for B.C. pharmacists to administer injections is already making a big difference in the fight against the H1N1 pandemic,” said BC Pharmacy Association (BCPhA) CEO Marnie Mitchell. “Pharmacists are the most accessible of all health care workers and can provide a quick and convenient option for patients looking for H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccinations.”

On Nov. 27 Mitchell and other BCPhA staff received H1N1 and seasonal flu injections from pharmacist David Massaro, the lead trainer for the BCPhA's training program. More than 300 pharmacists have received official authorization to administer injections from the College of Pharmacists of BC and approximately another 150 will receive authorization in the next few weeks.

The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport has confirmed that B.C. has 634,500 more doses of H1N1 vaccine this week.

“The response from pharmacists has been fantastic,” added Mitchell. “We know that the supply of the H1N1 vaccine has been challenging in some parts of the province and we hope that the increased number of doses will alleviate this issue in the near future.

“Our advice to anyone wanting the H1N1 or seasonal flu vaccine is to call their local pharmacist and ask if they are authorized to administer injections.”

B.C. pharmacists were officially granted the authority to administer injections on Oct. 21, by which time BCPHA had already put in place an Accredited Administration of Injections Program.

With about 2,800 community pharmacists practising in more than 1,000 B.C. community pharmacies, and many pharmacies open evenings and weekends long after physicians’ offices and public health units have closed, pharmacists are a logical, additional resource for injections administration.

Notes to editors:

1. Since the summer, BCPHA has been working with the College of Pharmacists of BC, the Ministry of Health Services and the BC Centre for Disease Control on the development, accreditation and implementation of an Accredited Administration of Injections training program. The program consists of two components: an online pre-study course and a full-day, live workshop where pharmacists receive practical training in administering injections.

2. The BC Pharmacy Association represents more than 2,200 pharmacists and 640 pharmacies in B.C. who provide trusted advice and accessible care to patients throughout British Columbia.

Contacts:

For interviews, photographs of BCPHA CEO Marnie Mitchell receiving the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines or to speak to a pharmacist administering vaccines please contact:

Simon Briault, BCPHA Manager of Communications: 604.269.2866 / simon.briault@bcpharmacy.ca