

THE Tablet

WINTER 2022 | ADVOCATING PHARMACY



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‡ Smart devices sold separately. For a list of compatible devices, visit dexcom.com/compatibility.
1. Shah VN, et al. Diabetes Technol Ther. 2018;20(6):428-33.
2. Beck, RW, et al. JAMA. 2017;317(4):371-378.
3. Welsh JB, et al. Diabetes Technol Ther. 2019;21(3):128-32.
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■ Cover Feature

8 **MEET THE WINNERS** The 2021 Pharmacy Excellence virtual awards gala took place on Dec. 2. This year's group of winners included the award categories in Excellence in Patient Care, New Practitioner, Collaborative Care, Innovative Practice, Lifetime Achievement and Friend of Pharmacy! Congratulations to the award winners.

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ON THE COVER

Read more about the pharmacists and this year's friend of pharmacy who received the 2021 Pharmacy Excellence Awards.



Jamie Wigston

Vaccines are pharmacy's opportunity to help end pandemic

To say everyone is tired would be an understatement. The last two years have challenged us in ways previously unimaginable, but despite these challenges, pharmacists have continued to go above and beyond, and we have dedicated ourselves to keeping our communities safe. On top of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 had decided to give us an extreme heat wave, floods, and a continuance of the ever-present opioid pandemic. But still, we push on and continue to deliver our services, putting our patients first, even when it has become increasingly difficult to do so.

With all of this in mind, I believe it's even more important for us to recognize a few of the pharmacists in B.C. who have been doing some truly amazing things. Amongst our awards recipients for 2021, we had some extremely deserving individuals who really do help shine a light on what our profession is capable of, when given the opportunity. These individuals have my congratulations, and I hope you have a chance to read about each of their accomplishments.

Over the last year, community pharmacies were slowly given the chance to administer COVID-19 vaccines. Starting with the short lived (but hectic) AstraZeneca campaign, and continuing more recently with pharmacies eventually being allowed to deliver the Moderna and Pfizer mRNA vaccines. I know I may not speak for every single pharmacist in B.C. when I say I'm extremely thankful that we are now able to help administer these vaccines, but I truly believe that as health-care professionals in this province, we have an obligation to help end, or at the least ease, this pandemic when presented with the opportunity, and we now have the opportunity. We all know it's going to add to our already busy workloads, and not everyone is going to appreciate the additional work we put in on a daily-basis. All we can do is continue to roll with the punches and know that what we're doing is making a difference.

Finally, I'd like to use this opportunity to really acknowledge the amount of hard work the staff of the BCPhA has been doing since the start of this pandemic. They have been working days, nights, weekends, almost non-stop, to make sure pharmacists and pharmacies continue to receive the utmost support, in addition to the incredible advocacy they have delivered on our behalf. They have been working tirelessly, continue to work tirelessly, and on behalf of the entire board I would like to really express the gratitude we have for their endless efforts.

I'm very excited at the prospects of the coming year, and I look forward to working with everyone on the new opportunities that will come for pharmacy in B.C. I can't wait to see what we as a profession can accomplish. **T**



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Geraldine Vance

Progress on COVID-19 boosters has been amazing

We are now approaching the two-year mark since the COVID-19 pandemic came into our lives. On March 12, 2020 the BC Pharmacy Association staff team headed out to work from home until things settled down — we assumed this would have taken a couple of weeks. Yet here we are, facing the two-year anniversary and I, and most of the team, continue to work remotely, doing our part to contain spread of the virus in the community.

As I started to contemplate what we had all come through and what we are yet to face I returned to the term “resilience.” This resilience applies not only to the Association team but certainly applies to community pharmacists. Pharmacy has been called upon time and time again in the last two years to bounce back, pivot, pull it together and move forward. In the meantime, B.C. has faced unprecedented natural disasters: fires, floods, avalanches, the snow storm of a lifetime. The impact on British Columbians is nearly impossible to calculate. People’s livelihoods were washed away, their homes destroyed and all this in the midst of the ever changing threats from the pandemic.

All of these once-in-a-lifetime events had a direct impact on every pharmacist in every community in our province. Pharmacists have filled many of the gaps the pandemic has created in the day-to-day delivery of health care. For months, when family doctors closed their offices and only offered virtual care appointments, pharmacists were in their pharmacies answering questions for patients and delivering care. When the vaccine program started, community pharmacists were anxious to do their part. First, getting involved with the AstraZeneca vaccines and now, delivering hundreds of thousands of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Pharmacists are helping to take the pressure off public health who have been stretched so thin. The profession moved quickly to get the understanding they needed about the new mRNA vaccines and to modify their work flows to immunize an increasing number of people each week. The progress on the COVID-19 booster campaign delivered by pharmacy is nothing short of amazing. The BCPhA has been so privileged to work with the provincial COVID-19 vaccine implementation team to assist pharmacy to get on-boarded to deliver vaccines. The partnership we have with the team, and government in general, is terrific.

Minister of Health Adrian Dix and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry have shown great support for the profession and the work pharmacists are doing. We were able to negotiate a top-up to the regular vaccine fee, a weekend premium to increase immunizing capacity, the option for pharmacies to hire other health professionals to administer the vaccine, and most recently, approval was given for pharmacy technicians to administer COVID-19 vaccines. These measures, along with direct distribution of the vaccines and ancillary supplies, demonstrates that government has given its support and confidence to pharmacy to play a key role in managing the pandemic. We are grateful for this support.

There are few silver linings to this pandemic, but one is that it has provided pharmacists the opportunity to show value to their patients, to Minister Dix and others within government. Pharmacy has been resilient and reliable and that will be remembered long after these two years are behind us.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2022, I certainly hope there is less need to face new threats and more time to bank some of that resilience for another day. **T**

Member News

Do you have a professional or personal update you want to share in *The Tablet*? Email editor@bcpharmacy.ca to share your member news.

RPhTs authorized to administer COVID-19 vaccines

B.C. has recently updated its public health orders to authorize regulated pharmacy technicians to administer COVID-19 vaccines. Pharmacy technicians are eligible for PharmaCare’s administration fee, until the end of B.C.’s COVID-19 public health emergency.

The BCPhA is offering a skills training workshop for pharmacy technicians to gain hands-on experience in administering intramuscular injections. The four-hour in-person workshop was developed in accordance with the B.C. Centre for Disease Control’s COVID-19 Immunization Skills Checklist and will be led by an experienced injection-certified pharmacist instructor.

The intent of the course is to prepare technicians to meet the BCCDC Skills Checklist in order to administer COVID-19 vaccinations.

For more information, please visit bcpharmacy.ca/events

Meet our new Board Members

We ask this year's directors to tell us what they would like to accomplish during their terms



Michelle Gray

Elected 2022-2024

Pharmacy Manager,
Gray's Compounding Pharmacy
(Kimberley)

It is with great pleasure that I am representing pharmacists of B.C. on the board of the BC Pharmacy Association. We have found ourselves in a very interesting time of change during the pandemic and pharmacists have stepped up to the challenge to serve the communities that we live and work in. In my time as a pharmacist since 1998, I have never been so excited about the opportunities that our profession is on the precipice of significant change.

I hope to see our profession move to have prescribing rights for minor ailments. I would like to see reimbursement for the cognitive services involved with prescribing. I would also like to see pharmacists have the ability to order lab work for the clinical services we provide.

With the ongoing shortage of primary care physicians, we are seeing an unprecedented number of communities without a family physician. The public has become increasingly reliant on pharmacists to extend their prescriptions and to offer advice. The trust our communities place in their pharmacist is one to be cherished and nurtured.



Kylee Power

Elected 2022-2024

Pharmacy Manager, Central Drugs –
Lantzville Owner, The Central Drug
Stores Ltd. (Nanaimo)

As a community pharmacist and business owner, I recognize the time and energy Pharmacists and Registered Pharmacy Technicians devote to providing exceptional patient care. The knowledge, patience, and understanding we use when communicating with patients is key to a successful and healthy interaction. Unfortunately, I also see how much of our valuable time is spent ensuring strict regulatory compliance. I would love to see more of our energy devoted to improving the health and well-being of our patients, but it simply is not possible when the current system demands a series of forms and processes to “audit-proof” our actions.

To be clear, I am a big fan of documentation, when it serves a purpose. I will use the current Smoking Cessation Program as an example.

I have found the following types of documentation, while not legally required, to be extremely helpful: Making notes

on a patient profile about their goals and concerns when they are attempting to quit smoking, setting reminders to follow up within a few days of picking up NRT to see how things are going, and maintaining a list of patients who were initially unsuccessful but keen to try again in the new year. Documenting these improve future patient interactions and ultimately increase the patient's chance of success.

However, requiring a pharmacist to fill out and have a patient sign the same form 3 times, confirm the patient's address/ telephone number and update PharmaNet 3 times, then file and retain those 3 forms, not with our already extensive prescription filing, but in a separate yearly alphabetical and chronological system, for what I can only assume to be ease of a punitive audit? To me, this doesn't make sense.

I ran for my position on the board with the platform of the importance of reevaluating reimbursement models, decreasing administrative burden, and expanding services to support pharmacists. Ultimately, it is my desire to drive changes that reduce the barriers to us being the exceptional health care providers we all strive to be.

Also new on the Board this year are:



Linda Gutenber
Elected 2022-2024
Pharmacy Manager,
Heart Pharmacy IDA at Shelbourne
Plaza (Victoria)



Mike Huitema
Appointed 2022-2024
Associate-Owner,
Shoppers Drug Mart #277
(Kamloops)



Mark Dickson
Appointed 2022
Pharmacist,
Retired
(Kelowna)

Superior patient retention was demonstrated with SPIRIVA® RESPIMAT® (SMI) vs. SPIRIVA HandiHaler® (DPI) at 12 months^{1*†}

SPIRIVA RESPIMAT (tiotropium bromide monohydrate) is indicated as a long-term, once-daily maintenance bronchodilator treatment of airflow obstruction in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema, and for the reduction of exacerbations.²

Please consult the product monograph at www.boehringer-ingelheim.ca/sites/ca/files/documents/spirivarespimatpmen.pdf for contraindications, warnings, precautions, adverse reactions, interactions, dosing, and conditions of clinical use. The product monograph is also available by calling us at 1-800-263-5103 ext. 84633.

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Please consult the product monograph at www.boehringer-ingelheim.ca/sites/ca/files/documents/spirivapmen.pdf for conditions of clinical use, contraindications, warnings, precautions, adverse reactions, interactions and dosing. The product monograph is also available by calling us at 1-800-263-5103 ext. 84633.

SMI=soft mist inhaler; DPI=dry powder inhaler.

* Comparative clinical significance has not been established.

† The sample used in this study was 24,497 Canadian patients (15,322 of whom started SPIRIVA RESPIMAT and 9,175 of whom started SPIRIVA HandiHaler) from January 2020 to June 2020. Each cohort was tracked 12 months from initiation.

References: 1. IQVIA Longitudinal database (LRx), August 2021. 2. SPIRIVA® RESPIMAT® Product Monograph. Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd., May 7, 2019. 3. SPIRIVA® HandiHaler Product Monograph. Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd., November 24, 2017.

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*I am really humbled and grateful,
and have been a strong supporter
of pharmacists as immunizers.*

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Honouring Pharmacy Excellence

Each year, the BC Pharmacy Association Excellence Awards are presented to the province's most deserving pharmacists and allies of the profession. This year's group of winners included the award categories in Excellence in Patient Care, New Practitioner, Collaborative Care, Innovative Practice, Lifetime Achievement and Friend of Pharmacy! Congratulations.

BY MICHAEL MUI

Dr. Bonnie Henry FRIEND OF PHARMACY

TITLE Provincial Health Officer

WORKPLACE British Columbia Ministry of Health

LOCATION Victoria, B.C.

Be kind. Be calm. Be safe.

Nearly two years after the public equipped itself in the fight against COVID-19, British Columbians have become closely familiar with this guiding message. British Columbians now know we are not alone, and that we have the steady and confident leadership of none other than **Dr. Bonnie Henry**, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer.

"Bonnie, first and foremost, is a friend of British Columbians, of Canadians and of anybody who may have been impacted by this pandemic. She has been to the coalface. She knows how bad this can be and so, I think she has an ability to look beyond the boundaries of individual professionals and look to what is needed to get the job done," said Geraldine Vance, CEO of the BC Pharmacy Association.

Pindy Janda, Association Board Member, said she had never felt so valued as a community pharmacist as she had felt under Henry's leadership.

"I think it's fair to say it's the first time that I felt it since my graduation in 1997, that we have had someone at her level notice community pharmacists and how we are contributing to health-care in B.C.," Janda said. "Dr. Henry has a keen awareness and understanding of the value of collaborative health care. She understands how every single part of health-care is crucial to take care of patients."

Especially, her advocacy for pharmacists to be immunizers has been significant, said Jamie Wigston, President of the Association.

"She's such a large proponent of pharmacists being immunizers. She has really been pushing for pharmacists to be able to perform COVID vaccinations and for us to be able to do so in community practice," Wigston said.

John Tse, former Association President, said pharmacists appreciate Henry's calm and collected manner of leadership, especially as decisions must be made while factors constantly shift.

"As a profession, we are here to help you. We are here to support you and we will rise to the occasion when you need us," said Tse, this year's Lifetime Achievement winner.

Henry, Provincial Health Officer and recipient of the 2021 Friend of Pharmacy Award, said pharmacists have been crucial to protecting British Columbians during this pandemic.

"I am really humbled and grateful, and have been a strong supporter of pharmacists as immunizers as an important part of our program across B.C. and across Canada for many, many years," Henry said. "We first started having pharmacists as immunizers in 2009, during the influenza pandemic, and it has been such a really important role in our communities across the province."

Throughout the pandemic, community pharmacists in B.C. have supported British Columbians as immunizers, advice providers, stewards of essential medications, and as crucial access points to health-care, Henry said.

"When we think about pharmacies, it's a community-neighbourhood thing. People go in and get advice, they build relationships with their local pharmacists, and that's really important in supporting people, especially when many medical offices were closed for a period of time," Henry said.

Looking ahead, as the world watches the pandemic's development, Henry said she will need the help of pharmacists as B.C. prepares to protect its most vulnerable through third-dose and booster vaccine campaigns.

“We’re going to be relying on you even more come the New Year. The role that pharmacists will play in being able to deliver booster doses is going to be so, so important,” Henry said.

“Your role in immunization is incredibly important, not only in pharmacies, but also going into long-term-care homes, supporting our elders and seniors, with influenza, with pneumococcal, with zoster. The range of support that pharmacists can play as immunizers, in the pharmacy and also in other settings, really extends our ability to protect people.”

Henry said pharmacists have administered the majority of influenza vaccines for British Columbians, in addition to participating in public health clinics, and have been increasing their confidence in the role of immunizers.

“There’s a lot of strengths in pharmacists across the province, and I know it’s going to be a challenge,” Henry said. “The challenge, I think, will be more logistical and operational in making sure we get the right information, that you have a system for getting people through your pharmacy while still being able to do the other pharmacy work, but I am sure we will be up to that.”

“

When we think about pharmacies, it’s a community-neighbourhood thing. People go in and get advice, they build relationships with their local pharmacists, and that’s really important in supporting people.

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“As people get on board with the system and we get vaccines out, I think it will increase the comfort level, and that is going to be something that will be a legacy for us from this pandemic, of how we can have many immunizers across this province and the important role pharmacists will play in that.”

Vance, Association CEO, said pharmacists are ready.

“Dr. Henry was there when pharmacists were first granted injection authority in 2009. She has seen the success. She saw what happened when there was a measles outbreak a few years ago, and how quickly that pharmacists could respond to that,” Vance said.

“She is certainly very aware of the capacity that pharmacists have. I think in many ways, my experience with pharmacists is that they have a similar approach to Dr. Henry: Stay calm. We’re just going to plough through this and we’ll get it done.”

Just like how pharmacists stepped up in March to help with administering AstraZeneca vaccines, Janda said pharmacists are ready to mobilize, and quickly too.

“We mobilized within four days. I think that really speaks volumes to the confidence that Dr. Henry had in our profession to come to us,” Janda said.

“This is now extended to the booster program as well.”

John Tse

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

TITLE Chief Executive Officer

WORKPLACE 36Eight Technologies

LOCATION Vancouver, B.C.

The past three decades of pharmacy in British Columbia has seen the profession change, forcing pharmacists to adapt as new services, new technologies and new medications evolved the type of care patients receive at pharmacies.

For some, the changes meant keeping up with the pace. While fewer in number, others became pace-setters: who actively seek the challenge that comes with each change, who anticipate changes before they happen, and who seek to make changes themselves to better the profession.

Even before he became a pharmacist, **John Tse**, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, started seeing how pursuing changes in existing pharmacy practice can better serve patients, and as a result, serve the profession.

“When I started in pharmacy, I was a technician. I was going to school and observed how busy a pharmacy can be,” Tse said, adding that at the time, there were no private spaces in pharmacies for consultations.

“And that’s how we came up with the concept of these sit-down consultation booths. This goes back 15 to 18 years,” said Tse, now CEO of 36Eight Technologies after more than two decades at London Drugs, where he was Vice-President, Pharmacy and Cosmetics.

In the push for private consultation spaces, Tse realized another challenge had surfaced. While there were now spaces for pharmacists to consult with their patients in private, pharmacists’ hands were already full with existing dispensary duties, which prevented them from spending more time with patients.

“So what we did was we put in automation. We had robots, called ScriptPro, filling prescriptions in the back so the pharmacists had time to sit down with the patient, review profiles, review problems with drug interactions,” Tse said.

“We turned the whole work process upside down and we made it efficient. We saved a lot of back-and-forth work. We would interview the patient, understand the treatment needs and if there were any questions the patient can answer and iden-



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*If you focus on the
health outcomes,
everything follows.*

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John Tse, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, helped pioneer the use of consultation booths at London Drugs pharmacies.



“

We turned the whole work process upside down and we made it efficient. We saved a lot of back-and-forth work.

We would interview the patient, understand the treatment needs and if there were any questions the patient can answer and identified, we called the doctor right away.

All while sitting down in a booth in a semi-private environment.

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tified, we called the doctor right away. All while sitting down in a booth in a semi-private environment.”

It was Tse’s capability for identifying solutions to perceived challenges that earned him his reputation for being a forward-thinker.

“You could sit down and look at an issue and say, ‘John, could we improve patient care by doing X,’ whatever X was, and he would come in with a well-researched, well-thought out, outside-the-box approach to what could be done, what should be done, and how we can achieve those outcomes,” said Wynne Powell, former London Drugs CEO. “He is blessed with an inquiring mind and a mind that constantly challenges himself and others as to, ‘what could we be doing better?’ To this day, after I retired, I missed those sessions with John.”

Shawn Sangha, former BCPhA Board Member, spent years working with Tse at London Drugs after he was hired by Tse. During the time they worked together, Sangha said Tse advocated for several major changes that continue to positively impact the profession today.

“One was to have certified technicians to check prescriptions, rather than have only pharmacists check prescriptions. Another was in advocating for pharmacists to do vaccinations. Another big one was, bringing in, on a mass scale, robotic dispensing equipment into pharmacies,” Sangha said.

“Ultimately, what these changes did was move the profession forward. Pharmacists could do more clinical services, like immunizations, like medication reviews, like spending quality time with patients.”

Sangha said Tse gave him valuable leadership lessons that he continues to use today.

“One is, you’re only as good as your team. If you surround yourself with good people and you treat them well, that will be good for everybody around. Another is, always give credit where credit is due. Give credit to the front-line people, the pharmacists, the pharmacy assistants, the technicians, the managers, they are the face of your team. The credit needs to be given to the people who are the backbone of your organization, and of your team,” Sangha said. “Those are a couple of big points I’ve learned.”

Pam Pasicnyk, a pharmacist who works with Tse at 36Eight Technologies, said she had known of Tse’s reputation as a leader before they met.

“Integrity is a huge, huge thing for me and integrity was clearly part of the way he operated. That drew me in right away. For me, it’s super important for me to work around people that I admire and that I trust. John was all of those things,” Pasicnyk said. “He cares about people. Honestly, that is one of the main things about John. Even though he’s managed to do these amazing, high-level roles, he hasn’t lost that part of himself.”

These days, at 36Eight Technologies, Tse is pioneering yet another changing field by advocating for pharmacists to be at the forefront of medical cannabis in Canada. His business has developed a Clinical Recommended Information System to assess patients’ needs for medical cannabis to provide recommendations of cannabis products, with personalized dosing, titration, and progress tracking to help patients reach their steady state.

“Right now medical cannabis does not touch pharmacy. It’s outside of our health-care ecosystem other than a nurse practitioner or physician prescribing it. The patient doesn’t know what to take, what to use, the strains, how much to use, does it interact with drugs, all that clinical care that goes with managing the patient,” Tse said. “Pharmacies should be at the forefront. That is our skillset.”

Tse anticipates there could be a lot of potential in medical cannabis to benefit the profession’s bottom line.

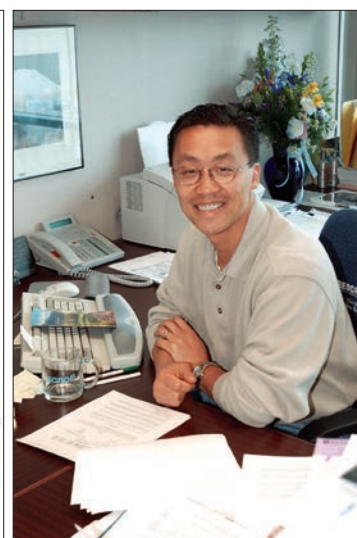
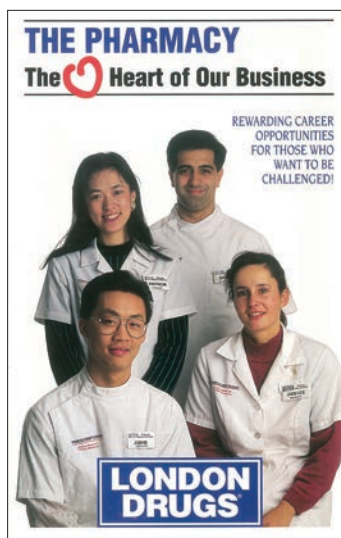
“To give you an idea, the medical cannabis market in Canada today is between \$500 to \$600 million. It’s a large market and pharmacy could be the lead,” Tse said. “What pharmacists need to do, looking forward, is to see where health-care is going. Have an opinion on where health-care is going, and focus on the health outcome of the patient.

“If you focus on the health outcomes, everything follows.”



Above: More recently, Tse has been exploring how pharmacy can lead the field of medical cannabis.

Below: Throughout his years, Tse has made a significant impact on how pharmacists do their jobs across British Columbia.



“

This was changing the way people thought about pharmacists. That's what really inspired me to keep going.

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Lindsay Dixon

BEN GANT INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

TITLE Pharmacist

WORKPLACE Heart Pharmacy Group

LOCATION Victoria, B.C.

It was a simple gesture. A kind act to help a neighbour who wanted more information about COVID-19 at the beginning of the pandemic. At least, that was the intention before pharmacist **Lindsay Dixon** realized just how many others were in the same situation as her neighbour — in the dark, bereft of accurate information as the fear of COVID-19 settled in the psyches of British Columbians.

Worst yet, some of those who did not have accurate, reliable information about COVID-19 sought questionable sources, often from online social media.

“This is a problem,” Dixon said. “Misinformation is a pandemic of itself right now. So if we have a voice that speaks to dispel misinformation and if this voice comes from a pharmacist, then I can’t think of a better way to educate the public right now.”

Armed with a smartphone camera and her laptop, Dixon saw the opportunity to be that voice. She began making videos to provide coverage on topics where she believed more education would benefit the public. Slowly, she saw herself being able to turn the tide of misinformation before a public audience that was increasingly tuning out traditional, mainstream news and favouring their preferred social media platforms.

“As I started making these videos, I started noticing that people were really paying attention,” Dixon said. “They were learning, and they were also seeing pharmacists in a different light. I had people even come up to me to say they had no idea a pharmacist had this kind of knowledge. “This was changing the way people thought about pharmacists. That’s what really inspired me to keep going.”

And she did. Dixon’s Friendly Pharmacy 5 project now has a library of more than 100 videos — thousands of hours of labour in all — and some of her top videos are receiving tens of thousands of views from across the country and beyond. And as if intending to headbutt the source of misinformation itself, Dixon chose social media platforms to share her education.

“Lindsay is one of the more innovative pharmacists in B.C. right now,” said Jason Cridge, owner of the Cridge Family Pharmacies group. “Lindsay is dispensing a lot of information to the people that need it and I think that really signifies the direction the profession of pharmacy is taking, in that we’re a resource of information for patients into the future, rather than just dispensing medications.”

Zahra Rayani-Kanji, owner of the Heart Pharmacy



Dixon's educational videos are increasingly gaining her recognition as a public health expert. Here she is being interviewed by CHEK News on the use of masks.

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group where Dixon is employed, said Dixon is a natural when it comes to translating the complexities of health-care for patients and the public.

“You may not know this about her, but she was living in Brazil and that's where she did her pharmacy degree. She learned Portuguese, she did her degree in Portuguese and then she came back to Canada to practice as a pharmacist. That speaks volumes to her capacity to take in information, translate it, and understand how to connect with others,” Rayani-Kanji said.

Before she embarked on the Friendly Pharmacy 5 project, Dixon had never previously produced a video for publishing.

“It was really hard to actually first put myself on camera. As pharmacists, it's not something that really comes naturally to us,” Dixon said. “But when I saw it was really helping people, none of that mattered. Every time I make a video I try to make it a little bit better.”

Some of Dixon's latest topics include information on N95 mask efficacy, herd immunity, sleep medications, therapeutics for COVID-19 and more. Her videos are short, factual and to the point, with a focus on being as accessible to the wider audience as possible.

She is also gaining support among her colleagues, and also encouraging those others in the profession to take their voices to social media.

“We often Tweet back and forth,” Cridge said. “I watch her videos on YouTube. It's definitely a fresh, unadulterated perspective of what's going on in pharmacies. Just her voice on YouTube, on Twitter, especially during the pandemic was great.”

And like many pharmacists, Dixon is not naturally one to seek the limelight, said Rayani-Kanji.

“I think it speaks to her empathy. She's very humble. I don't think she's superbly comfortable with the attention from the videos, because she's not somebody who seeks the limelight. Instead she really believes in the need to make sure people have the right information, or at least information they can make informed decisions with,” Rayani-Kanji said.

“There's a fearlessness in her and I think it's coming from knowing it's the right thing to do. Lindsay has been phenomenal. Everything she has shared has been an education for our team at Heart Pharmacy, so every member of our team is actually taking Lindsay's information and communicating it.”

These days, Dixon even receives routine invitations from the local television media requesting her presence on health-care news segments.

“Often we see doctors in the news, we see different scientists, but it's not that often you see a pharmacist,” Dixon said.

“This is a pharmacist speaking.”

Charissa Tonnesen COLLABORATIVE CARE

TITLE Pharmacist, Owner
WORKPLACE Pharm Team Holdings Corporation
LOCATION Tumbler Ridge, B.C.

Nestled within the Rocky Mountains next to hills topped with towering, white windmills lies the community of Tumbler Ridge, a former coal mining town, now home to a population with a thirst for the beautiful British Columbia outdoors.

This is a place where the modern explorer has an equal likelihood of discovering a breathtaking view one moment, and uncovering ancient footprints of dinosaurs the next. It is in this community where pharmacist **Charissa Tonnesen** has decided to call home, and where she has served the town's population of 2,000 for more than 20 years.

During that time, Tonnesen has been a member of the Tumbler Ridge Museum board, a member of the Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark board, a karate world champion, instructor and member of the Northern Rockies Karate Do board, a member of the Tumbler Ridge Community Arts Council board, a member of the Tumbler Ridge Youth Services Society board, among other community leadership roles.

"Anything and everything, got to give it a try right?" Tonnesen mused. "I like the fact that I'm part of the community. I get to know my customers not just in the pharmacy but also out in the world. We're all living here together, and working here together."

Lori Bonertz, a member of Tonnesen's pharmacy ownership group, said Tonnesen's involvement even extends beyond her community.

"Charissa contributes to training the next generation of pharmacists. She has been a preceptor for pharmacy students from UBC for many years. She ensures that they learn not only about pharmacy but gain an appreciation for living in a small town and the available social and recreational opportunities," Bonertz said.

"Charissa is also a board member of uniPharm Wholesale and one of her close colleagues is on the College of Pharmacists of BC. Thus, Charissa has a deep understanding of both the supply chain for pharmacy and governance of the profession."

Bob Norman, a local senior resident, said Tonnesen is among the only health professionals he has ever called a personal friend.



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”



Having spent the last 20 years practicing in Tumbler Ridge, Tonnesen is a fixture in the Northern B.C. community.

“We have acted together on the stage in the Grizzly Valley Players, we’ve sang together in the local community choir, we’ve been out on dinosaur digs together,” Norman said. “In Tumbler Ridge, quite often, you’ll hear the phrase, ‘talk to Charissa.’ The seniors know that if they can’t get a hold of the doctor, it’s easier to drop into the pharmacy. You don’t need an appointment, you don’t need a phone, you can drop in and if Charissa is here, she’ll talk to you about your problems. It makes life so much simpler here.”

Her time in the community has resulted in collaborative relationships with the town’s family physician.

“She’s got credibility,” said Dr. Charles Helm, a family physician in Tumbler Ridge. “In this day and age there is so much misinformation, conspiracy theories, you need people like Charissa to give evidence-based, science-based information.”

Together, Helm and Tonnesen collaborated on the Shared Care Initiative, a program that aims to reach out to British Columbians 65 and older who are currently taking five or more medications. The idea is to perform joint medication reviews to identify whether patients are taking medications they no longer need, or medications that will negatively interact with each other.

“We identified 85 people in Tumbler Ridge out of a population of about 2,000 who met the criteria. Over the course of a year, we saw maybe two to three people a week, mostly by Zoom and sometimes by phone,” Helm said.

“Out of the 79 people we reached, we made 226 recommendations and more than three-quarters of the recommendations were to reduce, stop or taper medications. The amount of gratitude our patients had was a huge eye opener.”

Many patients, Tonnesen found, didn’t understand

why they were continuing to take medications that they had been taking for years. For many, taking the medication was simply a habit.

“It was a wonderful opportunity to go through medication by medication and to ask, ‘why are you on this? Do you still need it?’” Tonnesen said.

“The patient response was excellent. People really enjoyed it, even if we didn’t make any changes to their medication, they just appreciated our time.”

One particular medication Helm and Tonnesen focused on was proton pump inhibitors.

“These are medications for reducing stomach, which is intended for short-term use but people use them long-term just because it’s really hard to stop taking the medication once you’ve been on it for a while,” Tonnesen said. “If you stop it suddenly, you suddenly have increased acid production and you have heart burn, stomach pain and it might feel worse than it felt when you started taking the medication.

“So people just think, ‘well that means I need it.’ But that just means you need to come off it a bit slower.”

For Helm, the physician, having a pharmacist who has dedicated her professional and personal life to the community of Tumbler Ridge was like meeting his soulmate.

“We just see the same thing. We agree on everything,” Helm said. “I’m just such a believer in longitudinal care — care over a long period of time. I’ve known people from when they were born to a middle age, or from middle age to their senior years, it’s the same for a pharmacist.

“All pharmacists are important but for pharmacists just starting off, they are at a disadvantage compared to someone like Charissa who has been in the community and has known the same clients for such a long time, and has all the trust and the relationships with them.”

As for Tonnesen, the idea of collaborating with her community and with fellow providers has always come naturally.

“I’ve always naturally tried to do it. In high school, I was part of the school band and you have to collaborate. You can’t make a sound that sounds good without being on the same page as everybody. Same with team sports, you just get that sense that you have to be part of a team to function,” she said.

“It’s important to understand your patients and in order to do that we need to understand the people. If you see somebody once a year or you’ve only met them once, you don’t really get a sense of that. It is that long time spent getting to know people where you get to know them.”

Norman, meanwhile, believes that despite living in a smaller, rural community, that he is receiving far better health-care than he would receive in an urban setting.

“You find that as a senior, your children sort of say, ‘mom, dad, don’t live in a small town. Move to where there is a hospital.’ But you’re not necessarily better off in a big town with a big hospital where you’re sitting in an emergency department for quite often, hours before anyone sees you.

“Here, you get seen right away if you have an emergency.”

Tonnesen said it’s the feedback she receives from her patients, such as Norman, that keep her going.

“The award is humbling in a way, but I’ve always tried to do the best for my patients and the feedback I get from my patients is what drives me to keep doing what I’m doing. It is wonderful to get outside validation as well.”

“

It’s important to understand your patients and in order to do that we need to understand the people. If you see somebody once a year or you’ve only met them once, you don’t really get a sense of that. It is that long time spent getting to know people where you get to know them.

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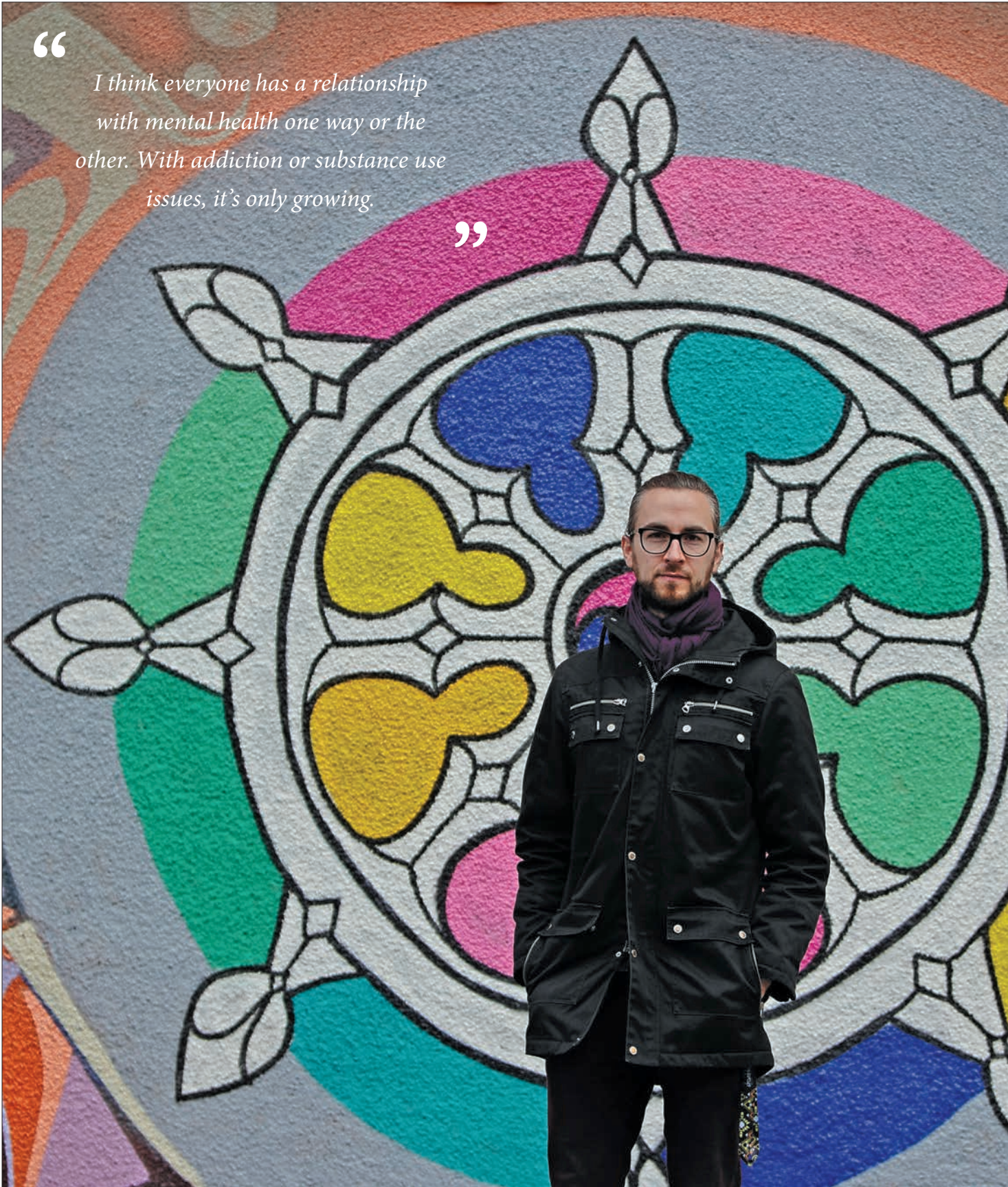
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“

I think everyone has a relationship with mental health one way or the other. With addiction or substance use issues, it's only growing.

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Jarred Aasen

EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT CARE

TITLE Pharmacist, Founder

WORKPLACE Lantern Services

LOCATION Victoria, B.C.

In the midst of a toxic supply crisis that has gripped much of North America, Jarred Aasen knew harm reduction was the underserved area where he could make a big difference.

“I think everyone has a relationship with mental health one way or the other. With addiction or substance use issues, it’s only growing,” Aasen said.

Shortly after graduating from the University of Saskatchewan in 2015, Aasen moved to British Columbia, where he found a home at STS Pain Pharmacy, a community pharmacy that was willing to help patients experiencing challenges in mental health and addictions.

“People who use drugs or people experiencing homelessness always get the short end of the stick. They’re always treated second in line. I’ve always had an interest in mental health and addictions because I felt it was underserved,” Aasen said. “When I came to Victoria, I was working at a few different pharmacies of a few different flavours. STS was one of them and it really checked a lot of boxes for me. It was an independent, it was family owned and operated, they were easy going and willing to try new things. That was appealing.”

One of those new ideas was to provide a drug checking services where street drug users could bring samples of their substances to be checked. These checks, as the capability of drug checking services grew, are able to determine the presence of fentanyl and even its quantity within a sample, and crucially, tests like this are helping save lives.

There was only one problem. The service could not be legally performed inside a pharmacy due to existing regulations that prohibited pharmacies from accepting street drugs.

“So Jarred got involved and took over the project outside the pharmacy. He wrote letters to Health Canada, coordinated with the University of Victoria and they developed more and more sophisticated and accurate testing devices,” said Alain Vincent, owner of STS Pain Pharmacy.

Through his efforts, Aasen was able to have Health Canada certify a new organization, Lantern Services, as Canada’s first federally exempted drug checking site, which began operations in the unit adjacent to STS Pain Pharmacy.

“Jarred, by creating Lantern, created a model where stigma is reduced at some level,” Vincent said. “He’s giving drug checking more credibility, more acceptance. I’ve seen parents come in to get samples tested for their children — this is something you would not have seen in the past.”

Since then, the drug checking service in Victoria has grown to an additional location, Substance, located at 1802 Cook Street. Several hundred drug samples are now tested each month, resulting in the prevention of potentially hundreds of overdoses.

“Innovating in this area is definitely satisfying. But it is also really stressful. You’re pushing into the unknown. You have no map of the territory. There are ethics involved and there is the legality of working with substances,” Aasen said.



David Keeler (right), with SOLID Outreach Society, recalled how Aasen helped him feel at peace with his opiate addiction, something other pharmacies were unable to do.

“

Some people come from homes where they don't have relationships with their families, so if I could create that sense of community or trust where people can just hang out, that's all part of the treatment in my mind.

”

“But drug checking is preventing adverse reactions or even death. That is pretty objective. We are collecting information, demystifying things, and providing objective data and numbers to inform conversations about drug use.”

One of the most important qualities Aasen has is the ability to “be there” for those he provides health services for, said David Keeler, lead outreach with SOLID Outreach Society. Keeler recalled how Aasen helped him feel at peace with his opiate addiction, something that other pharmacies were unable to provide for him.

“I've seen all the hard work Jarred's put in. All the hours. He's being there, he's present and he definitely deserves the award,” Keeler said. “I would happily and truthfully advocate for anything Jarred is a part of. He has been a front runner in implementing this new

technology and so much more. We are all very lucky to have the support that he provides.”

Nancy Murphy, the mother of a patient who uses services at STS Pain Pharmacy, credits Aasen and his colleagues at STS Pain Pharmacy with saving her daughter's life.

“The first time I came in and met Jarred, he was so personable and he was able to engage my daughter in genuine conversation, not just about the treatment. At this pharmacy, it's very much a community where people care for each other,” Murphy said.

“This pharmacy saved my daughter's life. She's had a painful journey but I'm so grateful that she's doing well now.”

For Dr. Bruce Wallace, a professor of social work at the University of Victoria and a scientist in the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, Aasen provided an opportunity to collaborate with a community health provider.

“I heard about Jarred in the community because I had been working with overdose prevention sites and needle exchanges, so we knew Jarred was doing this work at STS Pharmacy. I have a background in harm reduction and research, my colleague Dr. Dennis Hore brought his background in spectrometry and Jarred brought his background in pharmacy. Since then, we've been really able to grow from those original ideas to provide a service people are accessing every day now,” Wallace said.

Sandy Angus-Vincent, director of the Daily Dose Society, a non-profit which helps provide support, donations and deliveries to drug users, has seen how Aasen goes beyond his duties as a pharmacist during his six years at STS Pain Pharmacy.

“During the seasonal times of year, whether it's Halloween or Easter, he would have events for our clients. During Easter, he would go and dip easter eggs to organize a competition for clients to draw on them. You can't find that in a regular pharmacy that is too busy to see past the medication. We all know the medication doesn't work if there isn't any love behind it,” Angus-Vincent said.

But for Aasen, bringing the holiday spirit to those he cares for is just part of being a good pharmacist.

“My family, my parents back home are very holiday-oriented and that's something I've always appreciated. I love to give back and I love showing others or teaching others to give back,” Aasen said.

“Some people come from homes where they don't have relationships with their families, so if I could create that sense of community or trust where people can just hang out, that's all part of the treatment in my mind.”

Fairuz Siraj NEW PRACTITIONER

TITLE Pharmacist
WORKPLACE Hillside Pharmasave
LOCATION Victoria, B.C.

The moment Fairuz Siraj walked into her store, Pharmasave owner Maria Kwari knew there was something different about the recent University of B.C. PharmD graduate.

“He walked in with his UBC pharmacy jacket on, very keen with a big smile on his face. I knew something was different and special about him,” Kwari said. “He was intelligent and he just had so much enthusiasm and that was really infectious for me. I felt he would be a really good member of my team.”

The first store Kwari appointed Siraj to was Pharmasave Esquimalt Plaza, where he worked as a pharmacist under the leadership of pharmacy manager Lisa Luu. Siraj left Luu an equally striking impression.

“He voiced his desire to help a clientele suffering from migraines within two weeks of starting at my store,” Luu said. “This is a real change from many of the new pharmacists that come out, because many of them can be scared in the beginning, but he was just really enthusiastic right from the get-go.”

Siraj started in January 2020, just months before the pandemic lockdowns would begin in British Columbia. At first, Kwari was worried that there wouldn't be enough patient interaction to excite her new hire due to pandemic restrictions keeping people at home, but that didn't stop Siraj.

Soon, Kwari provided space at her Hillside Pharmasave location in Victoria to open a migraine consultation clinic room.

“It all originated during my third year when I had a good opportunity to do an elective project through the UBC Pharmacists Clinic, which had a collaborative model with the Headache Clinic, where the pharmacist saw patients with migraine before these patients saw neurologists,” Siraj recalled.

“My job was to basically sift through the data and see if these patients who saw the pharmacist first had a difference. And of course they did.”

Armed with this knowledge, Siraj sought to find out how pharmacists in the community could step in to help this group of patients who otherwise faced long wait-times to see neurologists.



“

*I try to do what I can but honestly,
we have strength in unity.
If everybody can do it together,
we'll be there for our patients.*

”



Within two weeks of starting his first pharmacy job after graduation, Siraj came up with the idea of a specialized clinic to help patients with migraine.

“I got into it a little bit more,” Siraj said. “And actually, a lot more patients have migraine than diabetes, asthma and osteoarthritis all combined, so it’s huge.”

Siraj began consulting patients at the Hillside location, typically sitting down with each patient one on one to provide education about migraines, to review each patient’s medications and provide them with a list of options to treat their migraine. At the end of the consultation, a summary is sent to the patient’s physician or specialist with Siraj’s recommendation.

“In the beginning, a lot of physicians were just looking at my recommendation and not doing anything about it. But recently, because I’ve been doing so many migraine consultations, that they come up to me and they refer their patients to me,” Siraj said.

Siraj has already seen tremendous success among those he has helped.

“He was so personable, easy to talk to and very knowledgeable about everything migraine related. I learned he is a pharmacist who on much of his own time travels to different pharmacies to consult with migraine sufferers like myself,” wrote one patient, Annette Turnbull.

“His goal is to get awareness out about just how debilitating migraines can be on a sufferer’s daily life and quality of life; as well as make recommendations that might help lower the number of migraines one suffers from and ideally find a way to stop them at their onset.”

Sandi, another migraine patient, said she discovered Siraj’s specialty when she was speaking with him about

headache pills.

“He said, ‘I specialize in migraines.’ and I went, ‘OK!’ We tried a lot of different medications until I finally found one that actually worked. He is my life-saver. He is the best. I recommend him to other people too,” Sandi said. “I’m a different person. When I have a headache now I know what to take ... and the headache is gone. He’s just a breath of fresh air.”

So far, the service is not funded — though that is an area Siraj continues to work on by identifying external organizations to partner with, and investigating other jurisdictions in Canada where pharmacist-led migraine consultations may be funded.

“What I saw was that pharmacists had all this knowledge that they can use to make a huge difference, but they weren’t taking that

extra step. It could be lack of time, lack of knowledge, lack of reimbursement models or lack of scope of practice,” Siraj said.

“As pharmacists, we need to start thinking more of clinical services. I think the dispensing model will be a thing of the past quite soon, so we need to get our expanded scope of practice and get compensation so we can sustain and have this. We can do this by working together and going to the regulatory colleges and say, ‘look, we’ve been stepping up all throughout this pandemic to help these patients that are falling through the gap. We can do this, so why not us? We can help.’”

Dr. Walter Chow, a family physician in Victoria, wrote that he has personally referred challenging migraine patients to Siraj and patients have received valuable advice.

“I have found his assessments to be thorough and his recommendations to be well thought out and clinically relevant,” Chow wrote. “Patients have reported that they have gained valuable information on their condition as well as their prescribed treatment and they have gained valuable self-management skills.”

Luu, Siraj’s first pharmacy manager out of school, said Siraj’s enthusiasm extends well beyond just his work in migraine consultations.

“His passion and his enthusiasm for the job really helps inspire the rest of us,” Luu said. “Most of us, when we first start out we’re afraid of saying the wrong thing to patients or saying something that’s not correct. Fairuz was just so confident. He is so comfortable

with patients and is not afraid to talk to them.

“I think he was just born with this confidence, you either have it or you don’t. You can learn it to some extent, but a lot of it is just natural-born.”

Kwari also admits Siraj has the ability to make fellow team members equally as enthusiastic and motivated about their work.

“He’s fun to work with. He makes every day an interesting day. He’s always bringing information to us and challenging us to learn new things and be better versions of ourselves,” Kwari said.

“The patients feel it too. They know there is somebody who is so enthusiastic about their health-care and is willing to be there and to listen and provide information for them. That patients still come ack to see him to say, ‘hey, thank you so much for making a difference.’ That’s huge.”

Despite the accolades, Siraj emphasized that expanding the current scope of pharmacists in B.C. is not just his own journey.

“I try to do what I can but honestly, we have strength in unity. If everybody can do it together, we’ll be there for our patients.”

“

As pharmacists, we need to start thinking more of clinical services. I think the dispensing model will be a thing of the past quite soon, so we need to get our expanded scope of practice and get compensation so we can sustain and have this. We can do this by working together and going to the regulatory colleges and say, ‘look, we’ve been stepping up all throughout this pandemic to help these patients that are falling through the gap. We can do this, so why not us? We can help.

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* Comparative clinical significance has not been established.

† The sample used in this study was 24,497 Canadian patients (15,322 of whom started SPIRIVA RESPIMAT and 9,175 of whom started SPIRIVA HandiHaler) from January 2020 to June 2020. Each cohort was tracked 12 months from initiation.

References: 1. IQVIA Longitudinal database (LRx), August 2021. 2. SPIRIVA[®] RESPIMAT[®] Product Monograph. Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd., May 7, 2019. 3. SPIRIVA[®] HandiHaler[®] Product Monograph. Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd., November 24, 2017.

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Top 7 patients who may benefit from compounded medication

From veterinary to pediatric medications, compounding offers custom solutions that give pharmacists more flexibility to serve their patients.

BY STEPHANIE YEBOAH, BSC(PHARM)

Intro to topic:

Increasingly, pharmacists are seeing more drug shortages, more complex drug therapy problems in our aging population, an increased prevalence of taking more medication to combat side effects, and a growing movement towards living healthier. Now, more than ever, patients are seeking options.

Compounding is one way to provide options for patients by offering countless possibilities to prepare medications that are not commercially available. This means either the strength exists commercially but not in the dosage form that's needed for a particular patient situation, the drug/combination/strength does not exist commercially, or it can be a completely unique or innovative product.

In some pharmacies, when a new compound prescription comes in, there can be a workflow disruption and a question may pop up, "Oh no, it's a compound! What should we do?" It is in the pharmacy's and patients' best interest that pharmacists establish collaborative relationships with compounding pharmacies. These relationships can help best serve patients when the need arises. Pharmacists can refer patients directly to compounding pharmacies, or purchase compounds from compounding pharmacies to dispense to their patients when presented with a prescription.

There are some misconceptions about what compounding can offer, its limitations and who should receive a compounded product or be referred to a compounding pharmacy. It is a vital part of pharmacy, but there is a time and place when it is appropriate.

With compounds, as with all prescription medication, risks and benefits must always be assessed. Compounding allows perpetual flexibility and can achieve outcomes such as bypassing the first-pass effect, tailored combinations of medications, and drive topical medications through the skin to targets at various depths or allow it to enter the bloodstream.

Here are the top 7 patient types that may present to your pharmacy with a compound prescription:



Veterinary There are a growing number of pet owners seeking prescriptions for their pets through pharmacies. Many medications for pets and livestock need to be compounded into acceptable dosage forms. It is not uncommon to hear about pharmacies turning pet owners away because they were unable to provide the compounded prescription product. The need for veterinary compounded products is increasing every year. Given their wide range of species, breeds, sizes, medical conditions and flavour preferences, animals need flexibility and customization in their medication. Compounded veterinary medications can seem intimidating the first time around, but pharmacists are in the unique position of understanding drugs and knowing which resources to use to obtain the appropriate information. Veterinarians are often most happy to collaborate with pharmacists when it comes to providing a compounded therapy to that will help their clients. As you serve more veterinary customers and patients, your knowledge base and comfort level will grow. Think of it as an interesting opportunity. Pharmacists can provide optimal medication therapy for all species.



Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) Men and women have increasing options when it comes to how they choose to receive HRT. This subset of medications is not just reserved for an aging population. Everyone is unique and has different hormone and endocrine requirements. Commercially available tablets, creams and injections are not right for everyone. Compounding can even be an economical route for patients, as hormones can be combined into one product, rather than multiple products with multiple routes of administration. Compounded HRT is an important and rapidly growing area of compounding which can make a real impact to patients' quality of life. There is even some evidence to suggest topical estrogen may be safer than oral estrogen in specific situations.



Pediatric There are a growing number of medications available in liquid or other pediatric friendly forms. However, many therapies still need to be compounded into a flavoured liquid or chewable form for children. Compounding pharmacies often have vast databases of formulas and stability data to turn non-suitable dosage forms or raw active ingredients into child-friendly forms. Children on chronic medication may get tired of the flavour or develop a gag-reflex and refuse to take their medication, and the numerous kid-friendly flavours compounding allows is a bonus. With compounded medication, bitterness, sweetness and other flavours can typically be adjusted.



Acne, mask acne & skin conditions Acne and skin conditions often respond well to conventional commercially available medications. Compounding comes in during the instances when commercially available options do not work. It can be frustrating and disheartening to patients when they try multiple, often expensive medications for their skin conditions with no results, or a worsening condition. Compounding can combine keratinolytic agents (ie: salicylic acid), retinoic acid derivatives, steroids, lightening agents, calcineurin inhibitors, antibiotics, spironolactone, anti-aging ingredients, emollients and many other key ingredients in therapeutic amounts to target resistant or complex skin conditions. Ever heard of mask acne? With the use of masks in indoor public spaces and chronic use of masks among front-line providers, “mask acne” is now a thing and can be difficult to treat without removing the root of the problem: the warm, moist, friction-heavy area under the mask. Proper face hygiene and replacing your mask often is enough for most people, but some are developing resistant acne, bacterial or fungal infections behind their mask due to heavy mask use.



Drug shortages Even before the coronavirus-induced supply chain issues, there have been ongoing issues with manufacturer shortages and recalls. In some cases, an alternate temporary therapy can be used, but sometimes it is not the most appropriate option. Switching patient therapies can present risk to the patient. Compounders cannot make a product that is commercially available unless there is a shortage or lack of supply. Compounding pharmacies have access to a large selection of raw active pharmaceutical ingredients and may be able to make a very similar product to what the patient is taking. This can be key for serious conditions where it is not advisable to switch to alternatives such as epilepsy, chemotherapy, endocrine or certain pediatric conditions. Many pharmacists probably remember the spironolactone shortage in 2017, Florinef shortage in 2019 and the nystatin shortage in 2020. Compounding pharmacies were able to provide a buffer for patients and pharmacies who needed these medications.



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Feeding Tubes This can include gastroenterology tubes (G-tubes, PEG tubes, J-tubes) or nasogastric tubes. Most medications are not designed to be administered through feeding tubes. Crushing medications and administering them in liquid through feeding tubes can work in some instances, but is not ideal. Even with compounding medications for feeding tubes into liquids, at times the pharmacokinetic profile is unknown. Liquid medications are easier to give than tablets, prevents particles from sticking to the tubing and medications can be combined for easier dosing if appropriate.



Hospice & Palliative Care Hospice and palliative patients and their families undergo a heavy emotional burden. These patients have unique therapeutic needs. At times, they cannot use commercially available preparations due to physical limitations or cognitive issues at end of life, and require special dosage forms or concentrations of medications. As pharmacists, we can shine by guiding the patient, family and care team to choose optimal medication therapies. Compounded medication can be formulated into specific concentrations, combinations and dosage forms including sprays, suppositories, mucoadhesive suspensions, oral suspensions, troches, topical preparations and more.

When we think of hospice and palliative, pain control often comes to mind. While pain control is a key piece of their therapeutic needs, their drug therapy is very complex. Even within the realm of pain control, these patients may have an extensive list of medications to address muscular, neuropathic, inflammatory and bone pain. They are often dealing with many interacting medications, and can have difficulty taking oral medications due to nausea, vomiting or dysphagia. Additional common factors include dry mouth, agitation, restlessness, anxiety and depression, bed sores, wounds, and severe constipation due to narcotic pain control and diet. Patients and their families often have long-standing relationships with their local pharmacists, and in times of grief and uncertainty they may feel more comfortable with pharmacists they know and trust. Establishing a relationship with a compounding pharmacy can help ensure your patients have the option of getting these medications dispensed by their local pharmacy.

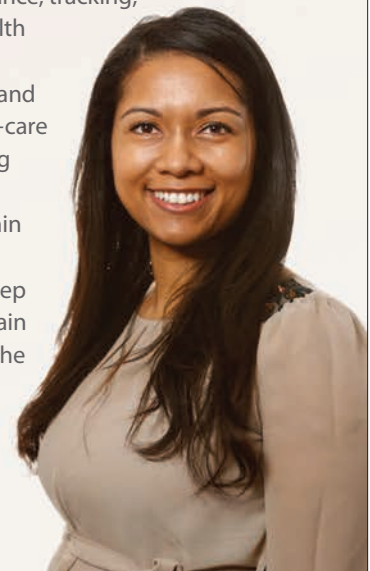
There are a wealth of commercially available medication options, but they are not always right for all situations. Take some time to reach out to a compounding pharmacy you want to collaborate with and establish a working relationship. The next time a compound prescription comes to your pharmacy, you'll know what to do. 

I'm Stephanie Yeboah, owner & CEO of Nanogram Pharmaceutical Compounding Ltd (Nanogram Pharmacy). I have been a compounding pharmacist for nearly 10 years, working in both human and veterinary compounding and have obtained numerous compounding certifications along the way. I was hired fresh out of university to the Western College of Veterinary Medicine's veterinary pharmacy and have been involved in human and veterinary compounding ever since.

Compounding is my place within pharmacy, and I'm so passionate about it. I recently sold my portion of a compounding pharmacy near Victoria, B.C. and have embarked on a new venture. Compounding is an essential service within pharmacy requiring specialized knowledge and certain facets of the industry can use some modernization; there's room to make processes more efficient.

At Nanogram Pharmacy, we make use of technology other than our old friend the fax machine. We consolidate experts in compounding and streamline the process of getting compounded products to patients, pharmacies, physicians, veterinarians, and farmers who need them. We compound all manner of non-sterile products for all ages and all species.

Using Nanogram's unique online platform at prescriptioncompounding.ca, providers can easily find and obtain the compounds they need within our vast database. Transparent pricing, regulatory compliance, tracking, and the use of Health Canada approved active ingredients and bases allow health-care providers obtaining compounds to maintain trust within patient-provider relationships, to keep their patients, remain competitive once the upcoming NAPRA regulations take effect, and focus on their pharmacy business.



Hope for the stranded

Pharmacist **Leanne Dale** was on the way back to Vancouver from Penticton when severe weather washed away parts of Highway 1 and locked off access to the community of Hope, B.C. Dale, who works at The Pharmacy Yaletown in downtown Vancouver, said she was trapped in the town with about 1,200 others. Here's what happened.

You were stranded in Hope during the catastrophic floods last year in B.C., what happened?

I was up in Penticton with my boyfriend and dog and we were coming back home to Vancouver on the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 14. The mudslide happened and we couldn't figure out what was going on. Traffic was not moving, cars were parked in gas stations and all these random places. So that first night, we slept in the car. We couldn't get food, water, gas, there was no power and we couldn't use our phones because there was no reception.

The next day, we drove around the town to assess the situation and we saw a high school with power on. There were a bunch of people, they had generators and they were giving people food, water, coffee and shelter.

I had told some of my friends that I was stuck in Hope by then, and fortunately there was an older couple who were friends with the relatives of a friend of a friend, and they told us we could stay at their home during the disruption. One of them is actually a nurse, and when I told her I'm a pharmacist, she told me there was only one pharmacist in all of Hope, and they were desperate for help because there were about 1,200 people stuck in Hope.

So you went there to help?

I only had a couple of outfits, so I showed up in ripped jeans and a sweater at Hope Pharmasave. We were working 12 hour days, not taking a break, arriving there an hour before opening and staying a couple of hours after close.

I've never worked in anything like that. You can imagine the amount of traffic going through Hope that day. There were people who needed their diabetes supplies, their heart medication, antidepressants, emergency supplies for everything and there was only one pharmacist who was able to get to work because of the mudslides.

The phones were ringing off the hook and the line-ups were so long, filled with people who were stressed out about their medications. They were mostly people from out of town and we're trying to make sure all these people have enough medications to survive.

People were obviously stressed out because they were scared, especially if they're insulin dependent or on beta blockers, or any sort of medication that has serious withdrawal if you stop



taking it. I was mostly behind the counter doing final checks and the counselling, and we had an assistant and a tech mostly at the front and filling the medication. It was quite the scene.

How did you make sure people got what they needed?

We were just doing maximum one week supply for any medication unless we had a lot of that certain medication. Luckily, the pharmacy was pretty well stocked up, but the distributor wasn't able to do deliveries because of the mud slides so we were being very careful and only giving a small amount to each patient. We were doing well over 500 prescriptions a day, with just two pharmacists.

There were a lot of different people who were either in the Interior for the weekend or in Vancouver for the weekend caught travelling through, it was a whole variety of people. There were more than 600 people staying at the high school, where there were a couple of doctors who stepped up, so there was even a station set up by the doctors in case anybody needed medical attention.

How did you eventually get home?

My boyfriend happened to be talking to a friend, who knew someone who was coming in by helicopter to bring supplies in town. They said we could hitch a ride back with them on the way back to Fort Langley.

Michael, the pharmacy owner, was really thankful. My boyfriend and I were both missing work at home. Obviously there was nothing we could have done about it, but I just knew it would work itself out and I was happy to be able to help, and make a difference. ■



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* Scanning the sensor does not require lancets.

† Individual private drug plans can vary. Please have your patients check with their plan administrator and/or insurance company.

‡ 60-minute warm-up required when applying the sensor.

§ Sensor is water-resistant in up to 1 metre (3 feet) of water. Do not immerse longer than 30 minutes. Not to be used above 10,000 feet.

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