

Pharmacies Calling for Access to Routine Immunizations to Help Protect Ontarians

Pharmacies across Ontario are calling for the ability to administer routine vaccinations after Ontarians missed their routine vaccinations due to COVID-19

NEWS PROVIDED BY

Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada

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TORONTO, October 20, 2021 / - Canadians have done the right thing to protect themselves and their loved ones against COVID-19, but in the process, routine immunizations have fallen to the wayside, risking a rise in entirely avoidable illnesses.

A poll undertaken by [19 to Zero](#) and commissioned by the [Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada](#) (Neighbourhood Pharmacies) found that as many as one in four adults has missed, or is unsure if they have missed, a routine vaccination for themselves or their child. Additionally, the data collected suggests that up to 35 per cent of children may have missed a critical routine vaccination.

“Located within five kilometres of 95 per cent of Canadians, community pharmacists’ top concern is the health of the communities we serve,” says Sandra Hanna, Neighbourhood Pharmacies CEO. “The drop in routine vaccinations is extremely concerning and is why we are asking the Government of Ontario to enable pharmacists to administer these potentially life-saving vaccines. Recent polling suggests that close to 70 per cent of Canadians support routine vaccinations being made available in pharmacies,” notes Hanna. “By providing Ontarians with an easy to access and convenient way to receive these vaccines, pharmacists, working alongside physicians and our health system partners, can reduce the current strain on the health system brought about by the pandemic, all the while ensuring Ontarians are protected from preventable illnesses.”

Pharmacies have proven themselves as invaluable healthcare partners working alongside physicians in the fight against COVID-19. They’ve stepped up as trusted healthcare professionals and to provide COVID-19 vaccines to their communities. Over 10 million vaccines have been administered through community pharmacies, and close to six million Canadians get their flu shot from pharmacies each year.

“We have seen throughout the pandemic a drastic drop in routine vaccination coverage,” explains Dr. Jia Hu, Chair of 19 to Zero. “Our recent poll, undertaken in partnership with the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada, showed that 70 per cent of missed routine vaccinations could have been avoided had there been greater access to healthcare providers who administer vaccines,” says Dr. Hu. “As a physician, I have seen the critical role played by pharmacists throughout the COVID-19 vaccination efforts and annual flu shot campaigns throughout the country. By enabling pharmacists to administer routine vaccines, Ontario would truly have an ‘all hands on deck’ approach to ensuring our communities remain safe and healthy.”

Now, pharmacy teams across Ontario are asking the government to [unlock the ability of pharmacy](#) to protect Ontarians against more than just COVID-19 and the flu but also illnesses such as pneumonia, HPV, shingles and more. If they have access to immunization records and the ability to administer vaccines, pharmacies can become a convenient, accessible point of care for Ontarians to access the routine vaccinations that keep them safe. Additionally, the ability to immunize Ontarians can continue the close working relationship pharmacies have with doctors’ offices and public health as partners in helping the healthcare system recover from the strain brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Help pharmacists keep Ontarians safe from a resurgence of easily avoidable illnesses by visiting www.oneinfour.ca and telling government to allow pharmacists to administer routine vaccinations.

About the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada

Neighbourhood Pharmacies represents Canada's leading pharmacy organizations, including chain, banner, long-term care, specialty pharmacies, grocery chains, and mass merchandisers with pharmacies. We advocate for pharmacies' role in caring for Canadians, both behind and in front of the counter. We aim to advance sustainable healthcare for all stakeholders by leveraging close to 11,000 pharmacies conveniently located in virtually every community throughout the country. Pharmacies are integral points of patient care.

About 19 to Zero

19 to Zero is a dedicated coalition of academics, public health experts, behavioural economists, and creative professionals working to understand, engage with, and ultimately shift public perceptions and behaviours towards vaccination to combat COVID-19 and other illnesses. www.19tozero.ca

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