



CANADIAN
PHARMACISTS
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION DES
PHARMACIENS
DU CANADA

Canadian Pharmacists Association Survey Reveals Drug Shortages a Serious Concern

December 15, 2010

OTTAWA – The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) today released a report summarizing the results of a survey of 427 pharmacists conducted in October 2010 on the subject of drug shortages. The report reveals that drug shortages have become a serious problem for Canadians – health care is suffering and patients are losing trust in drug supply. The report also offers reasons for the current round of shortages, and recommendations on how drug shortages can be addressed, including enhancing scope of practice for pharmacists so that they can more effectively manage patients during times of drug shortages.

Among the survey's key findings include:

- In their last shift, 81% of pharmacists indicated having trouble locating a medication; 93% of respondents indicated having trouble finding medication over the past week.
- The average number of drugs that pharmacists had difficulty locating in a one week period was 10.
- The average amount of time that pharmacists are dealing with shortages is 30 minutes per shift, although some pharmacists are spending up to 3 hours per shift.
- When asked whether patients health outcomes have been adversely affected, 70% of pharmacists said yes. Over 91% of pharmacists indicated that patients had been inconvenienced.

“This survey confirms that the current round of drug shortages has had a detrimental impact on the health of Canadians and the ability of pharmacists to care for patients,” stated Ruth Ackerman, President of CPhA. “Although pharmacists are stepping up and developing alternatives, the fact is that the various players in the drug supply chain need to work more cooperatively to ensure that supply issues are addressed, and that patients receive the medication and care they deserve”.

“This report should serve as a wake up call to everyone involved in the drug distribution system that shortages are a serious concern, and that solutions need to be developed,” added Dr. Jeff Poston, Executive Director of CPhA. “One immediate step that needs to be taken is for governments to regulate a greater scope of practice for pharmacists, so that pharmacists can use their specialized skills and training to help patients deal with a shortage when it arises.”

A copy of the report can be downloaded from the CPhA website at www.pharmacists.ca.

The Canadian Pharmacists Association is the national organization of pharmacists, committed to providing leadership for the profession and improving the health of Canadians.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Jeff Morrison, CPhA Director of Government Relations and Public Affairs

(613) 523-7877, x386
jmorrison@pharmacists.ca