



# CHAP NEWSLETTER: Fall/Winter 2022

**Editor: Tasha Ramsey (CHAP Secretary 2022-2023)**

Mission Statement: To bring together pharmacists with a clinical and research focus in HIV and/or viral hepatitis to optimize patient outcomes and promote the profession of pharmacy through communications, education, research, and clinical practice.

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## NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

**Carley Pozniak, Chair, 2022/2023**

Greetings fellow CHAP members,

I'm so honored to have been given the opportunity to act as your Chairperson for the 2022-23 year. This group is filled with amazing leaders and I'm happy to contribute back to a group that has provided such meaningful mentorship since the time I joined. I'd like to particularly thank my fellow executive team members in making the transition to this role a smooth one, Linda Robinson, Alice Tseng, Deb Yoong, and Tasha Ramsey. Linda Robinson did a fantastic job last year planning our AGM and keeping everything on course despite a last minute change to a virtual format and change of date! She maintained an unruffled approach and pivoted neatly as each challenge presented itself. Thank you for all of your hard work in your spare time and the time you continue to dedicate to CHAP this year as past chair.

Planning for the AGM has already begun; it will be hosted in Quebec City on April 26th, 2023 as an ancillary event at the Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS Research. I'm thrilled to report this meeting will be held in person and am looking forward to seeing many familiar faces again and re-connecting as we did before. I'll be sending updates throughout the year as the meeting date approaches.

We'll also be continuing on with our CHAP Chats this year. After polling our members, it was clear these chats are valued by many. Our first one was on December 8th. Presenters will discuss updates from some of the fall conferences they attended. The recording is available at this [link](#), passcode: 685C5jl.

I'm excited to announce we've added 4 new, strong working group members to our mix. Looking forward to working with Sue Gill, Caitlin Olatunbosun, Jackie Myers, and Stacey Tkachuk.

Happy Holidays!  
Carley Pozniak

# NEWS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

## NEWS from Nova Scotia



- ❖ **From the QEII Health Sciences Center Infectious Diseases Clinic, Halifax** (Tasha Ramsey)

Here in Nova Scotia we are busy responding to an increase in HIV cases.

Approach 2.0 exploring community pharmacy-based testing for HIV, HCV, and syphilis, launched in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Nova Scotia is proud to have 10 participating pharmacies. Alberta will also launch and begin testing in January. More information can be found on the study website available at this [link](#).

Dr. Debbie Kelly and I are also working with Dr. Kyle Wilby on the PrEP-Rx study that will begin in January and assess community pharmacy-based HIV PrEP prescribing.

I look forward to seeing everyone in person at the CHAP AGM this year.

## Nouvelles du Québec



- ❖ **From the McGill University Health Centre, Montréal**  
(Nancy Sheehan)

Following modifications to the Québec law on pharmacy in 2020, the pharmacy team at the Chronic Viral Illness Service is happy to report that we have “given birth” to a collaborative agreement between the pharmacists and the clinic’s physicians. The implementation of this important tool in the fall of 2022 allows us to prescribe independently all medications (except for narcotics / controlled substances) to the patients actively followed at our clinic, including HIV, viral hepatitis and opportunistic infection treatments. So far it has truly been a pleasure to implement our pharmaceutical care plan directly without delays. The medical team appears pleased with this new agreement.

Given we are just 1 to 1.2 FTE pharmacist at the clinic, with over 1500 patients, we continue to see patients on a consultation basis only. We have refined our service offering given our busy work load. We currently accept consultations for chronic viral infections and opportunistic infections, specifically in the context of:

- starting or changing pharmacotherapy, including prophylaxis;
- presence of an adverse effect;

- presence of or suspicion of a drug interaction;
- issues with medication adherence;
- renal or hepatic impairment;
- treatment failure;
- in the specific case of HIV
  - o virologic failure (defined as two consecutive measures of viral load  $\geq 200$  copies/mL);
  - o persistent low level viremia (defined as two consecutive measures between 50 and 199 copies/mL);
  - o pre-exposure prophylaxis in a complex case (after discussion with pharmacist);
- other particular contexts (e.g., planning pregnancy or transplantation, subtherapeutic TDM results, suboptimal therapy as per guidelines or new resistance data).

Currently two thirds of our consults are to switch patients to Cabenuva (cabotegravir/rilpivirine). Crazy. Due to our limited resources, we have had to make the difficult decision to refuse consultations for comorbidities (i.e., primary care).

Another important change is we have hired a new administrative assistant, Maria Korakianitis, who works with the pharmacy team at the clinic three days per week and TDM program the rest of the time. For the clinic, she mostly dedicates her time to setting patients up with co-pay program cards and compassionate access if needed, and resolving any problems. It is amazing how much time we are saving!

Finally, our clinic continues to welcome a large number of new patients that are asylum-seekers. They are mostly arriving through what is known as the Roxham Road, between the US and Canada border.

## NEWS from Ontario



### ❖ From UHN Immunodeficiency Clinic, Toronto (Alice Tseng)

The summer/fall has been a busy time (as always). We have some less senior physicians who have started taking over the care of patients who have been coming to the clinic for a few decades, which has been an eye-opener for them, resulting in numerous pharmacy consults. We have been successful in obtaining fostemsavir for a number of our patients through ViiV's Provision for Medical Need program and it has been well tolerated. We also just got our first compassionate supply of lenacapavir for one of our patients (just before it got approval in Canada).

**Monkeypox/tecovirimat DDI study.** Deb, Nancy and I are working on a Monkeypox/tecovirimat DDI study as part of a larger protocol headed by Dr. Darrell Tan. Darrell just received a CIHR team grant for this work, which will be done in conjunction with partners in Nigeria.

**CHAP observership: reminder about membership to join steering committee & submit applications!** The observership

program has been on hold due to COVID, and the group is happy to finally bring this program back for new practitioners as well as experienced pharmacists looking to gain exposure to new areas of practice. In person, virtual, or hybrid Observerships are available. More information on the Observership program and the application process are available at: <https://hivclinic.ca/chap/activities.php>

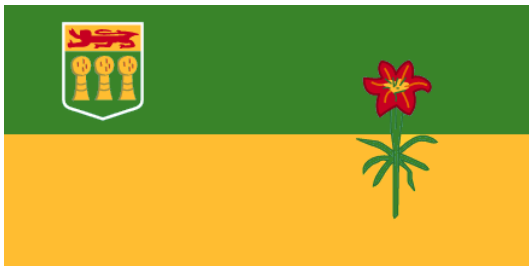
**Antiviral PK workshop (September 19-20, Barcelona):** This was the first in person/hybrid version of the workshop since 2019, and people were extremely happy to be able to congregate together for a jam-packed two days. It was a great honour to co-chair the workshop with Kim Scarsi from Nebraska, and Carley and Jenn rounded out the in person CHAP delegation. Next year's meeting will take place September 11-13<sup>th</sup> in Rome, with the Liverpool Course as a pre-meeting, so pack your bags!

**HIV/HCV Drug Therapy app: beta-testing of new version is running:** The app team has done a lot of work over the last year (and more) on an updated version of the app. Some of the new features include Quick Pick links in the Drug Information section so users can quickly find information on Liquid/Crushing information and Renal Dosing for individual drugs. In the Drug Interactions section, you can now search for complete chemotherapy regimens by acronym (e.g., you can type and select "BEACOPP" rather than typing and selecting the individual components of this regimen). A real time-saver! The beta-version of the app is now running at <https://hivclinic.ca/app-testing/>. Please feel free to check it out and forward comments to the app team at [app@hivclinic.ca](mailto:app@hivclinic.ca)

❖ **From The Positive Care Clinic, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto**  
(Deborah Yoong)

We just had our first snowfall here in Toronto (mid-November) and we are already looking forward to next summer (LOL)! Our clinic has transitioned back to mostly in-clinic visits with a few phone visits and with an \*almost\* full complement of staff, we are kept fairly busy with 11 clinics/week. After 13 years with the clinic, Mark Naccarato moved back to Windsor, Ontario at the end of the summer and accepted a position at the Henry Ford hospital in Detroit. His experience and expertise is certainly missed by his colleagues here but we know this is a great new opportunity and we wish him well. After a few months flying solo, I am very pleased to announce that we will (officially) be welcoming a new pharmacist to our clinic very soon. Unfortunately, we will lose our veteran social worker who has been with us for the last 20 years by the end of the year, but we hope recruitment will be quick and our patients will be well served. We continue to regularly receive new referrals (~10-15/week), but I am happy to report that all the referrals are not newly diagnosed but many are individuals who have recently moved, already taking medications, and are new to the country and our clinic. We do have many patients interested in switching to the long-acting injectable ARVs and so far the majority have embraced the change, with only a few that switched back to their oral therapy. None so far because of failure (cross our fingers)!

# NEWS from Saskatchewan



## ❖ From Regina (Jackie Myers)

Well, it's definitely feeling more "winter" than "fall" as I write this update for the newsletter after returning from walking my pups in the -20°C snowy weather, but here we are.

Things have been busy at the SHA-Regina Infectious Diseases Clinic with public health continuing to diagnose many new HIV cases each week. With the incoming of colder weather, many of our patients are struggling with access to safe and warm housing and so building relationships with the CBOs to help deliver some of the social determinants of health has been crucial. The Sexual Health Clinic continues to be swamped with treating and contact tracing syphilis cases, so the PrEP program continues to be exclusively managed virtually through the ID Clinic. We've also had a significant change in nursing staff over the last few months and I currently have an 8-week PharmD student with me, so lots of learners. One thing that has been nice this summer/fall is the return of in-person education sessions, which has been great for our learners as well as team bonding.

It's wild to think that in just a few months it will be two years since I've entered this role. I continue to learn every day and appreciate all the guidance and knowledge I have gained from this

group. Cheers and wishing all of you're a warm and happy holiday season!

## ❖ From Saskatoon (Carley Pozniak)

Hello from Saskatoon! We have exciting news with our program, we're welcoming a new 0.5 FTE pharmacist, Courtney Dalton. She has started her training and will shortly be transitioning over to the Westside clinic in Saskatoon to provide onsite support to the family physicians there who provide HIV care to over 700 patients. We're excited to have her and hope to make the temporary funding for this position permanent. On the physician side of things, we've lost another ID physician Shaqil Peermohamed who is moving his practice to Vancouver. We now have two ID physicians in Saskatoon that provide outpatient HIV care and several family physicians at the Westside clinic.

Covid-wise we still have many cases but RSV and Influenza have hit our population quite hard. Our hospitals continue to be overrun and overcapacity.

I was able to attend the International Workshop on Clinical Pharmacology in Barcelona at the end of September. Also in attendance for other CHAP members were Alice Tseng and Jenn Hawkes. It was a fantastic conference, excellent speakers and a more intimate interaction with only 50-60 in person attendees. Gave a chance to ask questions and make contact with many of the speakers. Jenn and I provided a conference update December 8<sup>th</sup>. The recording is available at this [link](#), passcode: 68\$C%5jl.

Happy Holidays



*Saskatchewan in 2006 and promptly moved to Vancouver (driven by an interest in HIV care) to complete a hospital pharmacy residency with Vancouver Coastal Health. In 2008, I began working with patients with HIV with the ambulatory HIV team at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. I worked with various HIV clinics, and worked on a number of research and operational projects. I'm passionate about population approaches to health and did an MPH in 2012. My personal life (I have 3 kidlets, and spry but aging parents in Edmonton) brought a move to Edmonton, and I currently work as a Clinical Practice Leader with Alberta Health Services. I continue a clinical practice in HIV in the Northern Alberta Program one day a week while also supporting practice at other sites, and working on provincial projects. I am looking forward to collaborating with the working group!*

## NEWS from Alberta



❖ **From The Northern Alberta Program, Edmonton** (Christine Hughes and Caitlin Olatunbosun, on behalf of the NAP pharmacy team)

Hello from the Northern Alberta Program (NAP) in Edmonton! After a beautiful summer and longer than usual fall, winter has arrived in Alberta! The snow is beautiful and for many winter outdoor enthusiasts, very much welcomed. We are excited that Caitlin Olatunbosun is now a working group member for CHAP. Congratulations Caitlin!

Caitlin has added a brief bio below to introduce herself: *Hello! I graduated from pharmacy at the University of*

In terms of other updates, Dr. Bohdan Savaryn has taken over as the new medical director for NAP. The patient load in Northern Alberta continues to increase (~2600-2700 patients) without an increase in staffing. Both SAC and NAP are now on Connect Care which will allow data gathering, reporting, monitoring and analysis of our programs, with the goal of provincial standardization of HIV care.

Christine is in her second (and last) year serving as Interim Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences. She has continued her roles in research, teaching, and clinical practice in a reduced capacity and is very grateful for the patience and support of her NAP (and CHAP) colleagues!

### **Publications:**

1. Olatunbosun C, Wilby KJ. Advocacy as a professional responsibility. Canadian Pharmacists Journal / Revue des Pharmaciens du Canada.

2022;0(0).  
doi:10.1177/17151635221125782

2. Shafran SD, Hughes CA. Bictegravir/emtricitabine/tenofovir alafenamide in patients with genotypic NRTI resistance. *HIV Med.* 2022 Aug 16. *Online ahead of print.*

3. Cooper R, Houston S, Hughes C, Johnston JC. Chapter 10: Treatment of active tuberculosis in special populations. *Canadian Tuberculosis Standards, 8<sup>th</sup> edition.* *Can J Respir Crit Care Sleep Med.* 2022; 6(Sup1): 149-66.

4. Sparks E, Zorzela L, Necyk C, Hughes C, Vohra S. Study of natural product adverse events in adult HIV-infected patients in Canada. *HIV Med.* 2022;23(1):29-38.

**Awards:** CSHP – BC Branch Publication Award in the category of original research for: Risk factors, screening, diagnosis, and treatment of osteoporosis in HIV-infected adults in an HIV Primary Care Clinic. *CJHP* 2022: 75(3).

## NEWS from British Columbia



❖ **From the Oak Tree Clinic, Vancouver** (Karen Tulloch *On behalf of the Oak Tree Clinic team* (Stacey Tkachuk, Gloria Tsang, Caitlin Chew))

Hello from the Oak Tree Clinic!

This summer we welcomed a new pharmacist, Caitlin Chew to our pharmacy staff. Caitlin graduated from UBC in 2021 with her entry to practice PharmD and completed her Pediatric Residency at BC Children's and Women's Health Centre Spring 2022. Our clinic continues to operate on a hybrid model of in person, phone and virtual appointments. This year we completed the integration of reproductive infectious disease and pediatric congenital infectious disease clinics, and after over a year of seeing reduced numbers, our obstetric clinic population increased to numbers seen prior to the start of Covid.

### **Ongoing projects and publications:**

- Ocegüera S, Tulloch K, Tkachuk S. Post-partum contraception in women living with HIV [published online ahead of print, 2022 Aug 16]. *HIV Med.* 2022;10.1111/hiv.13371.
- Pharmacy resident completed residency project on darunavir once daily dosing in pregnancy. We are currently working on disseminating our findings so stay tuned!
- Directed Studies pharmacy student finished reviewing use of the "Prevention of Perinatal HIV Transmission" protocol in BC over the last 4 years.
- Stacey and Karen are part of a working group which includes Carley Pozniak (SK) to create guidance on antiretroviral dosing in infants.

### ❖ **From Northern Health, Prince George** (Jennifer Hawkes)

Our regional specialized support team consists of a pharmacist and a social worker. Northern Health also has an HIV/HCV Network which provides funding to seven community organizations throughout the region to

promote such activities as education, harm reduction and treatment support. We now have our very own team “dashboard” that collects data from our medical office information system. Our referrals have been steadily increasing.

A dried blood spot (DBS) testing manual has been created and we were able to test over 80 unique participants at health fairs this summer. There are plans to have a virtual training platform developed and expand this low-barrier testing option and process across Northern Heath.

The PrEP prescriber options in Northern BC expanded to include TelePreP through BCCDC in September 2022 and there are also plans for a lower-barrier PrEP demonstration project involving the use of HIV self-testing to replace some of the traditional lab-monitoring.

We have had success this year with linking 33 patients to HCV care and treatment through the BCCDC Test-Link-Call project which provides a cell phone with a 6 month plan to eligible

participants (history of substance use, recent incarceration or homelessness). This has proven an invaluable engagement tool in many cases!

The Prince George Nechako OAT Clinic has been successful in incorporating HCV treatment, HCV engagement incentives, HCV education and HCV screening into their busy opioid agonist treatment clinic. The pilot began in October 2021 and has been extended October 2022 to include an on-site laboratory technician.

Our northern region, as well as BC, has continued to see more deaths from the overdose pandemic than the COVID-pandemic. We have seen 31 consecutive months (March 2020-September 2022) with over 100 illicit drug toxicity deaths/month. [Northern Health has the highest rates in BC in 2022 at 55/100,000](#), while the total number of COVID-19 deaths in BC is 4,525 between March 2020-Nov 10,2022 and maps of COVID-19 cases by Local Health Area have been discontinued.

*We look forward to seeing everyone in Quebec City at our next Annual General Meeting.*

*Have a peaceful holiday season,  
Tasha Ramsey (CHAP secretary 2022-2023)*