



Vermont Pharmacist Association

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Building One Voice for Pharmacy!

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Marci Wood, Editor

Vermont News

Spring 2016 CE Program

The VPA Spring CE meeting, titled **Opioid Epidemic - What Community Pharmacists Need to Know: Myths, Truths and Actions**, will be held on Sunday, April 3rd from 7 AM to 3:30 PM at the Holiday Inn in Rutland. Please see below for the schedule of presenters. The full brochure is available for download on the [VPA website](#).

7:00 – 8:00 AM	Registration, Continental Breakfast, Exhibits, Welcome
8:00 – 9:00 AM	<u>Opioid Epidemic: Vermont State of the State</u> Harry Chen, MD Vermont Commissioner of Health Vermont Department of Health Burlington, VT <u>At the completion of this activity, the participant will be able to:</u>
9:00 – 10:30 AM	Treatment and Recovery Options for the Opioid Epidemic Kurt White, LADC, LICSW Clinical Manager Brattleboro Retreat Brattleboro, VT <u>At the completion of this activity, the participant will be able to:</u>
10:30 – 11:00 AM	Break and Exhibits
11:00 – 12:00 PM	Business Meeting
12:00 – 1:00PM	Lunch and Exhibits
1:00 – 2:00PM	<u>Pharmacy Initiatives to Combat the Opioid Epidemic</u> [working title] Jacqueline Pratt Cleary, PharmD, PGY-2 Pain and Palliative Care Resident Stratton VA Medical Center Albany, NY <u>At the completion of this activity, the participant will be able to:</u>
2:00 – 3:00PM	<u>Role of Addiction Education in the Opioid Epidemic</u> Edward Baker, LICSW, LADC Addiction Education Specialist Burlington Labs Burlington, VT <u>At the completion of this activity, the participant will be able to:</u>
3:00 – 3:30 PM	<u>NABP Pledge to Fight Prescription Drug Abuse</u> Anita Young, EdD Director of Continuing Education Northeastern University – Bouve College of Pharmacy Boston, MA <u>At the completion of this activity, the participant will be able to:</u>
3:30 PM	Adjourn

VPA 2016 Membership

The Vermont Pharmacists Association's 2016 membership letters have been mailed out. You should have received your copy by now and if you have not, that means we do not have your correct mailing address. If you are interested in becoming a member (and we hope you are) then you can update your contact information by emailing vpamanager@gmail.com, or you can go the [VPA website](#). On the website, roll over the menu in the upper right hand corner, go to the membership page, and register using PayPal.

Upcoming Board of Pharmacy Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Pharmacy will be held at 9 AM on Wednesday, March 23rd. The meeting will be held on the 3rd floor of the City Center, 89 Main Street in Montpelier.

National Pharmacy News

Season's Flu Vaccine Nearly 60% Effective

The CDC recently reported preliminary data that show this season's flu vaccine has 59% overall effectiveness. This represents a drastic improvement compared to last season's vaccine, which had an effectiveness rate of 18%. According to surveillance data, this flu season's activity started later and has been lower than the past three years, but activity has been elevated for the past 5 weeks. The CDC continues to urge vaccination for anyone who has not yet received coverage with this year's flu vaccine.

[*Read more*](#)

FDA Approves Briviact to Treat Partial Onset Seizures

The FDA has granted approval for brivaracetam (Briviact, UCB, Inc.) as an add-on treatment for partial onset seizures in patients age 16 years and older. Briviact was studied in three clinical trials with a total of 1,550 patients. These trials showed Briviact to be effective in reducing frequency of seizures when used with other anti-seizure medications. Common side effects reported in these clinical trials included drowsiness, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, and vomiting.

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HPV Vaccine Sharply Decreases Risk of Virus in Females

According to a study published online in Pediatrics, HPV infections caused by the strains included in the quadrivalent vaccine have dropped by 64% in girls aged 14 to 19 years and 34% in females aged 20 to 24 since the vaccination program began in 2006. The results of this study's analysis confirm previous findings of HPV vaccination in teenage girls and extend these findings of decreased prevalence of viral infection to young adult females. The study utilized data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to compare the prevalence of HPV among females after introduction of the HPV vaccination program. The analysis included a total of 3,325 females from 2003-2006, and a 2,476 females from 2009-2012 (the 4 most recent years of data available). The analysis included females aged 14 to 34 years. The NHANES data showed at least one HPV vaccine dose was received by 51.4% of females aged 14-19 years, 32.6% of females aged 20-24 years, and 14.7% of those aged 25-29 years.

[*Read more*](#)

Online Tools Attempt to Combat Rising Drug Prices by Reporting Prices

New online resources are attempting to make generic drug prices more transparent. A need for increased transparency is apparent in light of frustration over rising prescription drug costs. This frustration was recently seen at a congressional hearing this month, when Representative Peter Welch asked a Turing Pharmaceuticals executive why consumers cannot have access to drug prices on a website, where anyone who wants to know what the price is can see it. Companies like GoodRx and Blink Health are using this focus on drug pricing to their advantage by offering online resources for consumers to determine drug pricing at pharmacies and connect customers with coupons. Blink Health also allows consumers to pay for their drugs online and then pick up their prescription at a pharmacy. While these resources may assist some patients, such as those with no insurance, patients with insurance may not benefit greatly from this information since the price through their insurance will most likely be lower than the cash price. Patients taking brand-name drugs also will not benefit greatly. Based on the portrayal of these resources in this New York Times article, patients may express confusion over how pharmacies receive payment for prescription drugs. Pharmacists should prepare to answer drug pricing related questions in regards to these new resources.

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Zika Vaccine Shows Efficacy in Mice

Inovio Pharmaceuticals says preclinical testing of its Zika virus vaccine has shown a robust response in mice, and expects to test the vaccine in humans before the end of the year. According to the company, mice injected with the vaccine showed antibody development and generation of T-cell response. Inovio has stated it is developing the vaccine with GeneOne Life Sciences Inc. and academic collaborators. There is no proven vaccine or treatment for Zika to date.

FDA Panel Recommends Approval for Biosimilar Remicade

The FDA Arthritis Advisory Committee voted 21 to 3 in early February to recommend approval for Celltrion and Pfizer's biosimilar Remicade (infliximab, Janssen Biotech). This would be the second biosimilar approved by the FDA for marketing in the United States, following the approval of filgrastim (Zarxio, Sandoz) last March. Some committee members expressed concern about the use of extrapolation rather than clinical evidence in seeking approval for indications including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. However, the evidence presented by Celltrion and a review by the FDA was enough to lead the majority of the committee to conclude there were no meaningful clinical differences between the two products. A final decision regarding the approval is expected in April.

[*Read more*](#)

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