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## NL pharmacist Stephanie Burden named Canadian Pharmacist of the Year

### COVID-19 pandemic shines light on essential role of pharmacists in rural communities

**March 8, 2021 (Ottawa):** A pharmacist in western Newfoundland & Labrador, whose practice became a community lifeline during the COVID-19 pandemic, has been named the Canadian Pharmacist of the Year by the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA).

When Stephanie Burden opened Complete Care Pharmacy in 2016, she launched something unique in her community of Rocky Harbour, NL—a health-care hub with pharmacy at the centre, that both patients and other health professionals depend on for education, advice and help navigating the health system.

Early on, Stephanie introduced health-care services not previously available in Rocky Harbour, including immunizations, minor ailment prescribing, medication reviews, compliance packaging and even same-day delivery to communities 90 km away.

In a rural area, where the community pharmacist is often the only health-care provider, these services have helped bring health care closer to home. “I really wanted to capitalize on that core value of familiarity when it comes to rural communities,” she says. “It gives patients a touch point. Somewhere, and someone, they are familiar with. The real heart of rural living is knowing everyone, waving at your neighbours. That shouldn’t change when you enter the health-care system.”

That critical role her pharmacy plays in the community has only grown under Stephanie’s leadership during the pandemic. As fears rose during the early days of COVID-19, Stephanie ensured her patients could continue to access the care they needed to stay healthy. Although public hours were reduced, the pharmacy offered phone and online ordering, and even made hard-to-find hand sanitizer for a local medical clinic.

She also leveraged her social media experience to reach out to patients, creating videos that offered advice on how to stay safe and calm. “COVID-19 made me feel more disconnected from my patients than I ever have,” she says. “Social media allowed me to stay connected, to give them advice on how to adapt and live well through COVID-19. I just wanted to be that dependable figure for them.”

“CPhA is so proud to recognize Stephanie’s passion for providing exceptional health care in rural Newfoundland and Labrador,” says Christina Tulk, CPhA Chair. “Her dedication to providing personalized care and education to her patients, especially during the pandemic, as well as collaborating with other health providers in her community, is a testament to the integrated role pharmacists can play in the health and well-being of Canadians.”

As an entrepreneur, Stephanie is passionate about sharing her experiences. She is generous with her time and ideas, encouraging her peers to embrace expanded practice and inspiring the next generation of pharmacy owners. Her advice, especially to women who are considering ownership or leadership positions: “Believe that what you’re doing and what you bring to the table really matters,” she says. “Find your core strength and let it guide you.”

Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy degree from the Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Pharmacy and is currently completing the PharmD for Pharmacists program at the University of Toronto’s Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy.

The Canadian Pharmacist of the Year Award is given annually by the Canadian Pharmacists Association to recognize a pharmacist who demonstrates leadership and exemplifies the evolution of the pharmacy profession toward an expanded role in health care.

**About the Canadian Pharmacists Association**

*The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) is the unifying national voice of pharmacy and the pharmacist profession in Canada. As pharmacists undertake an enhanced role in the delivery of health care services, CPhA ensures that the profession is recognized as a national leader in health care, influencing the policies, programs, budgets and initiatives affecting the profession and the health of Canadians. More information is available at [www.pharmacists.ca](http://www.pharmacists.ca).*

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