

10 health stories that mattered Aug. 18–22

- Canada Post is asking doctors to provide medical information for patients who are physically unable to pick up their mail from a community mailbox. Canada Post says this process allows for a “personal approach” to the new mail delivery system, but physicians are concerned about the administrative burden and the privacy of health information.
- Three leading Canadian physician groups refused to endorse a \$5-million federal government ad campaign warning about marijuana’s health risks to young people. The Canadian Medical Association (CMA), the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the College of Family Physicians of Canada support public education on the dangers of drug abuse, but state that the ad campaign has become a “political football.”
- A registry of reportable events at hospitals in Nova Scotia has been posted on the province’s health department website. Nova Scotia says the registry increases accountability and works toward greater patient safety.
- An Ontario-based study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* suggests that drugs used to treat dementia increase the risk of kidney injury. Close to 100 000 Ontarians over the age of 65 who used one of these drugs were compared with almost 100 000 similar Ontarians who did not use one of the drugs.
- The CMA’s Annual National Report Card on Health Care indicates a growing need for a seniors’ health care strategy. In the survey of 1000 Canadians (aged 45 and older), 95% saw the need for a pan-Canadian seniors’ care strategy.
- The federal government’s restriction on allowing only dried marijuana in its medical access regulations is unconstitutional, according to the British Columbia Court of Appeal. It ruled that those who require a different form are within their chartered rights to legally access it.
- Delegates to the CMA’s annual meeting voted to “support the right of all physicians, within the bounds of existing legislation, to follow their conscience when deciding whether to provide medical aid in dying.” The resolution is a change from CMA current policy, which states doctors should not participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide.
- Toronto’s Board of Health is asking Ontario to create legislation that would ban the use of e-cigarettes wherever smoking is prohibited. The move follows a report prepared by Toronto’s Medical Officer of Health.
- Canada’s first minimally invasive surgery for pectus carinatum, a protrusion of the chest wall, was performed on a 17-year-old man. The surgery involves bolting a bar to the ribs that pushes down on the sternum.
- Switzerland’s unclear doctor-assisted death regulations attracted 12 Canadians between 2008 and 2012 to travel to the country to end their lives. A study reporting that hundreds of non-Swiss “suicide tourists” are ending their lives in the country, was recently published in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*. — Jaya Rastogi, CMAJ

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