

## 10 health stories that mattered: June 5–11

- Canadians can consume [medical marijuana in any form](#) they want, ruled the Supreme Court of Canada. Previously, access was restricted to dried cannabis only and people could not legally consume it in other forms, such as brewed in tea or baked in brownies.
- The federal government signed a US\$4.5-million contract with Mapp Biopharmaceutical to [secure access to the ZMapp treatment for Ebola](#). The move is part of Canada's Ebola preparedness and response plan, which also includes funding for an Ebola vaccine and improving screening at borders.
- The [number of federal health and safety officers](#) has shrunk from 150 in 2005 to 80 today, according to statistics from the Public Service Alliance of Canada. The officers are responsible for monitoring and investigating 10% of Canadian workplaces including transportation, aviation and financial industries, as well as the federal government.
- The Canadian Institute for Health Information released [performance indicators for more than 1000 nursing homes](#) and other long-term care facilities that measure safety, quality of life and general health of residents. Names of long-term care organizations can be entered into Your Health System, an online tool, to compare performance with facilities in other regions.
- Cochrane Canada will lose its primary funding in September and has [started a blog](#) for people to share stories about how Cochrane systematic reviews have improved health care for Canadians. According to [Cochrane statistics](#), there are 2127 Cochrane authors in Canada and 1013 reviews with a Canadian author.
- The federal government has proposed [changes to the Controlled Drugs and Substance Act](#) to “better protect the health and safety of Canadians.” The proposed amendments would grant the federal health minister “the authority to quickly control potentially dangerous new drugs” and make it easier to “dispose of seized material where there is a health or safety risk.”
- Ontario plans to [double fines for breaching private medical records](#) and make it easier to prosecute offenders. Proposed fines for individuals will be \$50 000 for individuals and \$500 000 for organizations, and prosecutions will no longer have to start within six months of an alleged breach.
- Alberta's new NDP government will not go forward with its predecessor's plan to [decentralize Alberta Health Services](#). The previous government had planned to return to a regional model, but the new health minister said system change would create “more chaos and struggle.”
- Manitoba is set to become the province with the [most comprehensive post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\) coverage](#). It will include all workers now covered by the province's workers compensation board, not just first responders. The proposed legislation would allow those with work-related PTSD to more quickly access treatment and compensation.
- Medical marijuana company National Green BioMed Ltd. promised \$1 million to the University of British Columbia to [study the therapeutic value of cannabis](#). Research will focus on using cannabis to treat HIV and alleviate pain and nausea associated with HIV/AIDS drugs. BioMed is awaiting Health Canada approval to produce and sell medical marijuana. — Roger Collier, *CMAJ*

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