

## 10 health stories that mattered: Nov. 24–28

- The federal government has promised \$10.7 million over five years for new AIDS research. The money will fund two projects in Quebec. One will explore new approaches to finding a cure, and the other will focus on children born with HIV.
- Health Canada has asked Bayer Inc. to fund an education initiative to guide physicians on how to safely prescribe the acne medication Diane-35. The drug, which has come under scrutiny due to safety concerns, should be used as a “last resort” for severe acne but “many prescriptions for Diane-35 are off-label and prescribed as birth control,” announced federal Health Minister Rona Ambrose.
- A class-action lawsuit over a privacy breach has been filed against the federal government on behalf of users of medical marijuana. Health Canada recently sent letters to some 40 000 people with the words “Marijuana Medical Access Program” on the envelope. Correspondence to users of medical marijuana is typically more discreet.
- Nova Scotia intends to waste little time in creating regulations for electronic cigarettes. Provincial Health Minister Leo Glavine told the CBC that he worries the growing popularity of electronic cigarettes may undermine efforts to create “a whole public atmosphere that is truly smoke-free.”
- Ontario midwives launched a human-rights challenge over gender discrimination in pay. The Association of Ontario Midwives argues that salaries should nearly double and alleges that the health ministry’s pay structure has been discriminatory for two decades.
- A commitment to develop new research and HIV programs has been formalized between British Columbia and China. Premier Christy Clark signed a “memorandum of understanding” to create a three-year fellowship for Chinese scientists to work with researchers at the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS.
- Alberta may explore the idea of bringing back health care premiums, a controversial fee that was eliminated in 2008. A nonbinding resolution was passed at a Progressive Conservative convention to reverse the 2008 decision.
- Electronic health records will be introduced into 90 community-based health care clinics, reaching about 500 000 patients, announced the Ontario government. This will mean “better health promotion, better management of chronic conditions and better quality care,” Deb Matthews, minister of health and long-term care, said in a statement.
- Officers shouldn’t smoke medical marijuana while in uniform, according to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The issue was raised by Cpl. Ronald Francis, who received a prescription to reduce PTSD symptoms and says there is no policy that prevents him from smoking marijuana while on the job.
- Concerns about a medical isotope shortage were raised when the nuclear reactor in Chalk River, Ontario, unexpectedly shut down for repairs. But the reactor was brought online quickly and production was expected to return to normal by mid-week. — Roger Collier, *CMAJ*

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