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## Hunt 'doing nothing' on shortages

LITTLE is being done by the Federal Government to alleviate medicine supply shortages, Australia Labour Party MP, Dr Mike Freeland, believes.

Highlighting ongoing issues surrounding the availability of EpiPen Jr autoinjectors, Freeland told the House of Representatives that "the Health Minister is doing nothing".

Freeland said the supply shortages flagged by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) last month (PD 25 Nov) were "greatly distressing to parents who have a child with severe anaphylaxis".

The western Sydney MP told the House a number of vital medications listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme were in "very short supply".

Alongside the EpiPen Jr shortage, he said some antipsychotic medications, beta-blockers, newer statins, and migraine relief products

were running low.

"The Minister for Health is very prone to wanting to politicise the PBS, but we have such severe supply chain difficulties in Australia that we have critically short supplies of many of these life-saving medications, and the Minister has done nothing about it," he said.

"I myself have inquired of the Department of Health about these critically short supplies, and have been previously reassured that all is fine—but, in fact, it's not.

"We have critically short supplies of vital medications, [and] the Health Minister is doing nothing."

The TGA had 510 products listed as being in short supply, with 64 - including the EpiPen Jr - deemed to be critical for patients.

The medicines regulator is anticipating shortages of another 57 products, 12 of which are likely to be critical for patients.

Shortages of EpiPen Jr



autoinjectors are forecast to continue until at least 31 Jan, with sponsor, Mylan, reporting manufacturing delays at Pfizer subsidiary, Meridian Medical Technologies as the cause.

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) has noted that patients requiring an EpiPen Jr should contact their local pharmacy, while pharmacists have been told "only one EpiPen Jr should be dispensed to each patient".

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news.

## Inhaler technique key for asthma

PATIENTS with asthma are being urged to speak to pharmacies and other health professionals to ensure they are using their reliever medication effectively.

NPS MedicinesWise Medical Adviser, Dr Jill Thistlethwaite, has advised asthma patients to limit time spent outdoors, as bushfire smoke spreads across the east coast.

She said patients could reduce their risk of an adverse event by following an action plan.

"We know that using an inhaler can be tricky, but good inhaler technique is key to getting the most from your medicines, which could be especially important when air quality is low," she said.

"We encourage you to check your inhaler technique with a health professional or check out the tips on the NPS MedicineWise website.

"If you are needing to use your reliever medicine more frequently or you have difficulty breathing, chest tightness or increased wheezing which are not responding to your inhaler as you expect, seek medical help."

## Guild seeks to close the gap with RAP

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland Branch has developed the Guild's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and received endorsement from Reconciliation Australia for it.

Queensland Guild Branch President, Trent Twomey, said the RAP was a commitment to support the national reconciliation movement.

"There are 1,128 community pharmacies in Queensland

which are a vital part of our health system, and have the potential to make an even bigger contribution to the health of all Queenslanders," he said.

"Our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan provides a pathway to improve the ways in which we connect, recognize and provide positive health outcomes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People."

CLICK HERE to read the RAP.

## Rego renewal

PHARMACISTS who failed to renew their registration by 30 Nov, have until 31 Dec to apply or face being removed from the national register.

Renewals submitted this month will incur a late fee in addition to the annual registration fee.

Those who do not renew before 01 Jan will be unable to practice and have to make a new application.



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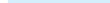
Review full PI before recommending or supplying Resolve Plus 1.0 PI available on request from Ego Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd, Australia.

Reference: 1. Resolve Plus Product Information Date of Most Recent Amendment: June 13 2017.

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## Dispensary Corner



WITH an election comes the pledges of support for the pharmacy sector that we saw in Apr ahead of the Federal Election.

And in the UK it's no different, parties of all stripes are professing their undying love to pharmacists and dreaming up new "opportunities" for community pharmacy.

Of the proposals proffered in the lead up to the 12 Dec poll, the British Green party has suggested pharmacists should branch out from their healthcare professional role and start dispensing currently illegal substances.

In its manifesto the Green party has said it wants pharmacists to enter the recreational drugs market, providing over-the-counter cocaine and amphetamines.

Outlining the Green's vision, the party's co-convenor of its Drugs Policy Working Group, Dr Alex Armitage, said specially trained pharmacists could dispense the drugs, provide "safety information" and direct patients to support services if required.

He also said pharmacists could provide prescription heroin, which would have a maximum dose per visit to reduce the risk of overdose, which Armitage compared to restrictions on paracetamol sales.

While legalising recreational drugs might be appealing to the Greens, disclosing a stash of cocaine to an insurer might see premiums soar.

## Cure for overprescribing

HIGH rates of unnecessary prescribing reported in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Australia's Health 2018 report highlights the need for greater integration of pharmacists in medication management roles, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes.

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman (pictured), warned doctors' prescribing of medications they know are not indicated for the conditions their patients have presented could lead to increased risk of adverse events and antimicrobial resistance.

"Prescribing unnecessary drugs to patients is not good practice in terms of quality use of medicines," he said.

"The more medicines a person has to take and manage the more risk there is of a medication related problem.

"While there may be some situations in which a placebo might help a patient, the research released this week found doctors were most likely to prescribe an



antibiotic.

"Unnecessary prescription of antibiotics can not only cause patients harm but impact on the future effectiveness of these vital medications.

"Increased utilisation of pharmacists as part of a collaborative health care team, including within general practice, will improve medication management and help educate consumers about quality and safe use of medicines."

On top of increasing the risk of adverse events, Freeman noted unnecessary prescribing was also impacting out of pocket costs.

## Win with Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away the pictured prize pack valued at over \$60.

Aloe Barbadensis 'Natures medicine plant' is renowned for its soothing, cooling and hydrating properties. Plunkett's Aloe Vera is fragrance and colour free and contains pure certified organic Aloe Vera extracted from Aloe Barbadensis Leaf – rich in vitamins, minerals, amino acids and anti-oxidants to restore dry and damaged skin all year round. Visit: [www.Plunketts.com.au](http://www.Plunketts.com.au) for more.

To win, be the first from VIC or TAS to send the correct answer to the question to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

Does Plunkett's Aloe Vera contain any artificial fragrance?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Vicki Whalland.



## Events Calendar

WELCOME to Pharmacy Daily's events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

23 - 29 Jan: NAPSA Congress; University of Newcastle; for more info visit: [www.napsa.org.au](http://www.napsa.org.au)

6 - 8 Mar: NSW/ACT Annual Therapeutic Update 2020; Crowne Plaza Terrigal; Save the date - registrations open 2 Dec: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

19 - 22 Mar: APP 2020; Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre; Early bird registrations now open: [www.appconference.com](http://www.appconference.com)