

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from Homyped.

Homyped for men

HOMYPED has launched a new range of men's footwear, in line with the company's threefold wellness categories targeting better health and freedom from pain associated with common foot conditions.

There's also a 20% opening offer available - see **page four**.

RPMA applications

THE Pharmacy Programs Administrator has opened applications for this year's Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance.

Renewals can be lodged up to 14 Jun 2019, with applications available through the portal at pbaonline.com.au by navigating to the RPMA program page for each individual pharmacy - more information on 1800 951 285.

Just one Rx option: Guild

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has rejected "insulting" responses from doctors' groups in relation to proposals for pharmacist prescribing (**PD** 17 Apr), saying their "negativity does them no credit" and could ultimately serve to limit patient access to healthcare.

Yesterday's Guild *Forefront* newsletter reiterated support for the autonomous prescribing plan suggested in the Pharmacy Board's discussion paper (**PD** 23 Apr), saying it is the only option that should be considered when it comes to expanding the role of the profession.

The Guild rejected the other two options canvassed: prescribing under a structured arrangement, or under supervision.

"In our response to the Board's paper we restricted our comments to autonomous prescribing as we see this as the only feasible option for improving medicines access and management," the Guild said.

"Autonomous Prescribing would see pharmacists prescribe within

their scope of practice without the supervision or approval of another health professional.

"Pharmacists are as trusted as general practitioners by the Australian public and this trust needs to be leveraged so pharmacists can administer basic healthcare services to drive down costs to patients and the health budget, reduce waiting times, and increase accessibility.

"Quite clearly, autonomous pharmacist prescribing would improve access to treatment options for conditions that can be managed by a pharmacist - including after hours and weekends when access to other health care professionals is limited or non-existent," the Guild said.

Autonomous prescribers would be "no different to a nurse practitioner", the response noted, adding pharmacists would be able to work collaboratively within the health care team to meet the health needs of patients.

FRED updates scanning reporting

PHARMACY software provider FRED has issued a new version of its platform which provides significantly improved reporting of pharmacist scanning rates for medications during dispensing.

The change follows concerns raised by Brisbane community pharmacist Mike Kaluschke (**PD** 22 Nov 2018) who wrote to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, the Pharmacy Guild and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia about his worries because FRED did not provide the ability to track the scanning activity of individual dispensers.

He acknowledged the response from FRED, with the updated software providing better tools in ensuring that dispensing is accurate and safe, and added that the outcome was "proof that we should not sit back and put up with whatever is in front of us...we need to challenge continually".



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TWC Masterclass gives pharmacists a boost



TERRY White Chemmart pharmacists have given their clinical skills a shot in the arm by taking part in the group's annual masterclass.

More than 400 pharmacists and pharmacy professionals attended the three-day educational event covering issues around vaccine hesitancy and pain management.

TWC Chief Operating Officer, Duncan Phillips, said the 2019 Masterclass was focused on immunisation and the expanding role of pharmacists.

"The increase in access to the range of immunisations administered by pharmacists and reduction in age across most states to 16 and over, means

our pharmacists are playing an ever-increasing role in protecting our communities from vaccine preventable disease," he said.

"With severe whooping cough outbreaks occurring in communities across the country, one of the earliest and deadly starts to an Australian influenza season on record and the worst measles outbreak in over a decade, the increase in availability of pharmacist administered immunisations is timely.

"Our pharmacists are now much better equipped to not only have more effective conversations with patients, but a clear strategy on how they can support the wider health care team and respond to

outbreaks in communities."

Pharmacist pain educator, Joyce McSwan, said the enthusiasm shown by TWC pharmacists at the masterclass would benefit the one in five Australians who live with chronic pain.

"Patients are crying out for pharmacists that care and are continually looking to find better solutions," she said.

"The dedication and commitment shown by TerryWhite Chemmart pharmacists at masterclass will deliver benefit for patients."

FDA insomnia alerts

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has mandated a new boxed warning on certain prescription insomnia drugs including zolpidem, zaleplon and eszopiclone to ensure that patients and health professionals "have the information they need when considering use of these medicines".

Brands covered by the change include Sonata, Lunesta, Ambien, Ambien CR, Edluar, Intermezzo and Zolpimist, with the FDA citing several reports of rare but serious injuries and deaths resulting from various complex sleep behaviours after taking these medicines.

In addition to the boxed warning, the agency is requiring the addition of a contraindication not to use the medicines in patients who have experienced an episode of complex sleep behaviours after taking them.

The FDA said it had closely watched the safety profile of the drugs since they were approved, with the risk of serious injuries and deaths seeing it take "stronger steps to inform the public".

Sponsor webinar

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration is holding a webinar for sponsors of existing listed medicines to transition to permitted indications.

The free online session will be held next Tue 07 May 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm.

See details at tga.gov.au.

PRIME nominations

ENTRIES are now being accepted for the 2019 PRIME Awards, which celebrate and recognise excellence in the pharmaceutical and life sciences industry.

It's the 15th year of the awards, with new categories spanning sales, marketing and public relations open to 15 Jun - primeawards.com.au.

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Dispensary Corner

TALK about being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

A woman from the US state of Arizona is recovering in hospital after heavy winds blew a beehive off a tree right onto her head.

The incident took place in the Phoenix suburb of Tempe, where wind gusts reached about 70km/h according to the US National Weather Service.

As well as landing heavily on her noggin, the angry bees stung her up to 30 times on and around her head before firefighters were able to subdue them with foam.

AND another bizarre hospitalisation took place in China this week, after a woman became so overwhelmed during a screening of the new *Avengers: Endgame* movie that she began sobbing uncontrollably.

News International reported on the case of the woman, referred to as Xiaoli, as she struggled to breathe due to her emotional reaction, with doctors eventually giving her oxygen to help regulate her respiration.

In another strange *Avengers*-related medical incident last week a Hong Kong man was beaten up by fellow movie-goers after he began loudly shouting plot spoilers to people queuing up as he exited a screening.

Guild “wrong” on codeine

FALLING codeine sales is evidence that the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) was right to upschedule the medications to prescription-only, the Australian Medical Association claims.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said sales data showing a 50% reduction in the use of codeine-based products in the 12 months after the molecule was upscheduled, from an average of 34.7 million packs over the four previous years to 17.1 million (PD 26 Apr), justified the decision.

“The TGA and the Federal Government held firm in the face of great pressure from the pharmacy lobby groups, particularly the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, which launched a prolonged and very strong multi-state offensive against this change,” Dr Bartone said.

“The pharmacy lobby also claimed that up-scheduling would lead to doctor-shopping, and patients switching from low-dose to high-dose codeine medicines.

“However, the TGA analysis shows that the increase in the supply of high-strength 30mg codeine between February and December 2018 was not statistically significant.

“These reforms have always been about reducing the level of codeine in the community, not about switching the source of the supply of codeine,” he said.

Dr Bartone said low-dose codeine products were among

Australia’s most commonly misused medicines, despite there being little to support their use.

“The evidence shows that low-dose codeine provides little benefit beyond placebo for short-term pain, and it is not a safe treatment for long-term or chronic pain.”

“Studies showed that thousands of Australians were using codeine inappropriately and putting themselves at risk of addiction, organ damage, and other health problems,” Dr Bartone said.

“The AMA strongly supported the decision by the TGA, as the independent regulator, to act in the interests of patient safety, and up-schedule codeine products.”

Epic lost wage claim

UNION group Professional Pharmacists Australia has lodged a complaint with the Fair Work Commission, over claims that Queensland based hospital pharmacy group Epic Pharmacy has withheld pay from members “in a move designed to force them to back down and accept wage cuts”.

The long-running dispute has seen the staff take “protected action” (PD 16 Apr) including zeroing out the cost of medications in Fred Dispense software, as well as refusing to take payments from customers at the pharmacy.

The union says the “overzealous cuts prove the system as it stands is broken”.



Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

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Dream Cruises Explorer Dream Sale

DREAM Cruises has launched special promotional rates for *Explorer Dream* cruises departing from Sydney.

The new “DreamSaver” promo has been released in celebration of *Explorer Dream's* recent christening in Shanghai.

Guests can save up to 30% for cruises departing Sydney between 27 Oct 2019 and 23 Feb 2020 with a range of seven-night itineraries from which to choose - destinations include Queensland, Tasmania and New Zealand.

Prices start from just \$505 per person twin share (Sydney to Auckland) - ring 1300 658 666 and visit dreamcruiseline.com.



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