

Rural pharmacy threat

PROPOSALS put forward by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) to allow double dispensing, could have a negative impact on the viability of regional pharmacies, Rural Pharmacy Network Australia (RPNA) Chair, Fred Hellqvist, warns.

While the Federal Government shelved the plan to slash spending on dispensing fees, prior to the Budget in Apr, the fact that the proposal remains on the table has irked the RPNA.

Hellqvist warned the move to 60-day dispensing would cost pharmacies an average of \$85,000 in gross profit, which could see owners forced to cut staff hours, and out of pocket costs for non-concessional patients.

"There is no doubt that double dispensing, introduced in isolation, would have a devastating impact on rural communities," Hellqvist said.

"The effects will be catastrophic."

Hellqvist said the viability of services including dose administration aids would be jeopardised by increased patient costs, with the RPNA Chair warning that cost savings from savings on dispensing fees being cancelled out by increased hospital admissions as the result of a reduction in pharmacy services.

"These losses will be particularly detrimental in rural communities where medical services are already under strain and patients are relying heavily on their local pharmacy for healthcare advice and triaging," a statement from the RPNA said.



"In the worst case, some towns could lose their pharmacy altogether.

"Community pharmacies form a vital part of the economic fabric of rural communities - you lose your pharmacy and the whole town starts to unravel.

"The fact that the Federal Government would even be contemplating such destruction in rural communities is hard to fathom - more so when you consider the cost savings may not be as significant as the Government expects.

"We should be looking at measures that save patients money, but also, and more critically, support and improve rural pharmacy services."

Prior to the Budget the Pharmacy Guild of Australia had successfully lobbied against double dispensing, however, the Consumers Health Forum and the Australian Medical Association have been vocal supporters of the proposal.

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Renew rego

PHARMACISTS have until 30 Nov to renew their registration with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or face a late payment fee of up to \$30.

In a message to pharmacists the Pharmacy Board of Australia warned those who fail to do so by 31 Dec will be removed from the Register of Pharmacists and barred from practising their profession in Australia.

The Board released an updated schedule of fees effective 19 Sep, with the national fee for general and limited registration \$408, while the non-practising registration fee is \$336.

CLICK HERE to renew your registration online.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news plus a full page ad from **Lorella Footwear**.

Activated Probiotics pharmacy rollout

ACTIVATED Probiotics is launching its clinically tested Biome Iron+ Probiotics in community pharmacies this month.

Activated Probiotics founder, Blair Norfolk, said the company had chosen to roll the product out through pharmacy, because he believed pharmacists were ideally positioned to identify patients with low iron levels, and intervened with strategies to prevent iron deficiency from occurring.

Norfolk noted iron deficiency was particularly acute for women during pregnancy and menstrual losses.

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The Infinity Group is currently seeking applications for a number of **Managing Pharmacist** and **Pharmacist in Charge** roles across South East Queensland.

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Dispensary Corner

WITH trick or treating over for another year, pharmacists in Indiana have been warning parents to keep their children safe as they devour the spoils of their door-knocked escapades.

Pharmacy manager, Creighton Kaiser, has advised guardians to keep an eye on their lolly consumption, noting young children could inadvertently chow down on medicines.

"One of the risks with all that candy is that kids might have a higher tendency to grab something off the table and put it in their mouth," Kaiser said.

"Maybe they've already had their allotted candy for the day so they won't ask their parents, and that can be a dangerous situation."

Kaiser urged parents to discuss the need for their children to check if the treats they are about to munch are safe for consumption before popping them into their mouths.

"Parents, have a talk with your kids and let them know it's not safe to take something and put it in their mouth," Kaiser said.

"They should always check with you or another adult before they take anything that could be candy."

Kaiser said parents should also take extra steps to prevent children from getting prescription pills.

"You should have those meds secured, preferably somewhere up and away from where they reach them with a child lock, which makes it harder to access," he said.

VPA flags S8 failures

FAILURE to appropriately store, record, audit and report on Schedule 8 (S8) medicines continue to occupy the overwhelming majority of panel hearings conducted by the Victorian Pharmacy Authority (VPA).

Of the 15 hearings conducted between Aug and Oct 2019, licensees had failed to meet their responsibilities to comply with the Act and/or good pharmacy practice at registered premises in 14 cases involving these S8 matters, the VPA reported.

Eight hearings resulted in licensees being cautioned and six hearings resulted in reprimands, the VPA said in its latest communiqué.

Ongoing attention will be given to pharmacy reference libraries, S8 storage, recording and reconciliation, barcode scanning, the dispensary as a separate area and issues around storage and display of S3 medicines including pseudoephedrine.

Following a consultation process around revised draft guidelines, the VPA has made "minor amendments" and now authorised the final version.

Key amendments relate to the



responsibilities of proprietors in dealings with locum pharmacists, health practitioner registration, pharmacist training, other personnel operating in a pharmacy and restricted keying systems.

Other elements updated involved medicine refrigeration facilities, vaccination room guidelines and time invested by pharmacists on dose administration aid-related tasks, as well as hygiene issues for that work.

Always a complex consideration, the VPA also made revised recommendations around compounding of medicines.

A separate appendix (Appendix 7) clarifies when VPA approval is required to carry on a separate business or activity within the pharmacy.



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Diabetes module

GUILD Learning and Development, with the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) and Diabetes Australia, has launched a new online course for pharmacy assistants titled *An introduction to the National Diabetes Services Scheme*.

This QCPP refresher training-approved module introduces pharmacy assistants to the NDSS and equips them to assist in the delivery of the scheme and promote its services and resources.

Visit guildd.guilded.org.au.



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.

14 - 16 Nov: SHPA Medicines Management 2019 (MM2019); GCCEC, Gold Coast; register now at: www.mm2019shpa.com

25 - 29 Nov: ASCEPT-PAGANZ 2019 Joint Scientific Meeting; Rydges Lakeland Resort, Queenstown, New Zealand; details and registration here: www.asceptasm.com

23 - 29 Jan: NAPSA Congress; University of Newcastle; for more info visit: www.napsa.org.au

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