



Meds safety a national health priority

FEDERAL, State and Territory Health Ministers have agreed to make Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) and medicines safety the 10th National Health Priority Area.

The announcement was made at last weekend's Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council meeting in Perth, and follows Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt's pledge to make medicines safety a national health priority at the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's (PSA's) conference in Sydney in Jul.

As part of the agreement the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council will collaborate with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Australian Digital Health Agency to prepare a national baseline report to identify priority areas, best practice models and new national standards.

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman welcomed the decision to commit to a baseline report, but

stressed "it must not stop there".

"There needs to be meaningful commitment from all parties involved in healthcare delivery, including health professionals, peak organisations, and government to reduce harm from medicines use," he said.

Freeman said the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) provided an opportunity for the Federal Government to fund pharmacist-led safety programs.

"Pharmacists are medicines experts," he said

"They must be supported to spend more time – both in the community pharmacy setting and other parts of the health care system, including aged care facilities – reviewing patients' medications, providing advice to members of the health care team, and educating consumers about medicine safety.

"Research released last week found pharmacist-led medicine charting in hospitals reduced the



proportion of patients with at least one medicine problem from 66% to 3.6%."

Freeman noted the *Productivity Commission's Draft Report on Mental Health*, released on Thu, overlooked the role of quality use of medicines in the treatment of mental health.

"We need to ensure we are using medicine as effectively as possible in the treatment of mental ill-health," he said.

"For this reason, PSA does not think it is possible to look at mental health care without considering the safe and quality use of medicines."

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from **Sigma Healthcare**.

Scholarship apps

THE Pharmacy Programs Administrator has announced that applications are now open for the Rural Pharmacy Scholarship Scheme (RPSS) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacy Scholarship Scheme (ATSIPSS) for students studying or intending to study pharmacy in 2020.

These scholarship schemes are funded by the Department of Health under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement and are designed to encourage and support rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students pursue a pharmacy career.

Email support@ppaonline.com.au to apply.

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Do AHPRA, Board work for pharmacy?

MORE than one-in-10 pharmacists believe the profession cannot trust its regulator, a survey reveals.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) review of stakeholder perceptions released last week found 11% of pharmacists saw the Pharmacy Board of Australia as an advocate - down 7% on the previous survey, with 14% describing it as competent (down 4%), while 16% said it was "controlling" (up 6%).

The survey found 12% of respondents did not trust the Board, while 17% said they did not trust AHPRA, describing the agency as "a faceless bunch of bureaucrats".

Critics of the Board accused it of allowing "Chemist Warehouse (CWH) and other businesses to destroy the pharmacy profession", while bias and nepotism were flagged as concerns by pharmacists. "[It] does not follow through on breaches by rich and more

powerful pharmacists," one respondent claimed.

"[It] just follows up on vulnerable pharmacists looking for work or [to] improve their position."


Another pharmacist claimed the Board was "dominated by the same monopoly of men who are friends and Pharmacy Guild of Australia members, all working with each other for their own benefit".

Critics of AHPRA accused the agency of being "out of touch with current challenges that practitioners face".


"They operate a system of health practitioners being guilty until proven innocent instead of the other way round," one pharmacist said.

Another pharmacist hit out at the requirement for health practitioners to report health conditions.

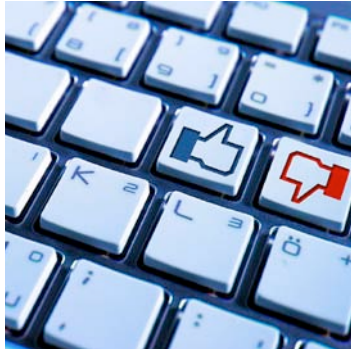
"Mandatory reporting of health conditions leads to those suffering health conditions not seeking help from fear of losing their registration



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and livelihood," the pharmacist said.

"This in turn leads to worsening of the underlying condition, self medication, other unhelpful coping mechanisms and likely has led to countless preventable deaths and suicides."

Others called for a greater distinction between the roles and responsibilities of AHPRA and the Board to be made clearer, with respondents saying that "on the surface it seems like a duplication in organisations".

WA's Advantage

BANNER group Advantage is expanding further into Western Australia with three more pharmacies joining the group.

The stores are based in Morley, High Wycombe and Falcon and have moved from the Friendlies Pharmacy group.

They anticipate being fully rebranded by Dec and will be called Advantage Pharmacy Morley, Advantage Pharmacy High Wycombe and Advantage Pharmacy Falcon.

This brings the total number of Advantage Pharmacies nation-wide to 256 with eight in WA, including the Advantage Pharmacy and Chemist Discount Centre brands.

Advantage Group CEO, Steven Kastrinakis, said these new pharmacy members were the first Advantage-branded stores in WA.



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Dispensary Corner

THERE are times when you just want to bury your head in your hands and give up on celebrity endorsements.

When you pick up a product or go into a store that holds a royal warrant claiming to have the backing of Her Majesty Elizabeth II, you would like to think there's solid evidence behind it.

That's certainly the case when it comes to the Queen's pharmacist.

However, Ainsworths "Homeopathic Pharmacy", which bears the royal coat of arms is offering vaccine alternatives for diseases including measles, polio and meningitis, prompting British medics to criticise it for promoting "irresponsible anti-vaccine propaganda".

The *Daily Mail* reported a booklet published by the pharmacy called "Mother and Child Remedy Prescriber", said, "homeopathy was the forerunner of conventional vaccination and offers the clearest answer as to how to deal with the prevention of disease".

"Homeopathy offers two clear options for mothers confronted by the emotional pressure to have their child vaccinated, enabling a well-considered and safe outcome," the booklet says.

"The first is as a complete alternative to vaccination, the second is a means of damage limitation for the ill-effects of conventional vaccinations administered."

CDC gives patients treat



CHEMIST Discount Centre Berwick got into the Halloween spirit providing patients with professional advice with a treat (not a trick).

The team decorated the pharmacy with spiders, cobwebs and jack-o'-lanterns, while dressed in witchy garb to create a fun experience for children coming into



the pharmacy.

Pictured, the CDC Berwick team embrace Halloween to give their patients a treat.

Inset, things get spooky behind the dispensary.

Vinnies tap'n'go

GUARDIAN Pharmacies and Vinnies Victoria are making it easier to help those in need by offer a tap and go donation service, when they are picking up their prescriptions.

Guild Update

MIMS/Guild Intern of the Year Award 2019

NOMINATIONS are open for the MIMS/Guild Intern of the Year Award 2019.

The competition winner will be announced, and the prize awarded, at the APP conference in March 2020.

The winning intern will receive a travel and educational scholarship valued at \$4,500, courtesy of MIMS Australia.

The MIMS/Guild Intern of Year Award aims to celebrate an intern who has proactively sought to implement positive change to their pharmacy and in the process has demonstrated excellence in one or more of the core judging criteria.

Intern candidates can be nominated by their supervising preceptor, employer, pharmacist or colleague, Guild ITP clinical tutor or they can nominate themselves.

To find out more visit www.interpharmacist.com.au/ intern-of-the-year/ or email info@interpharmacist.com.au.

Nominations for the award close Sun, 19 Jan 2020.

Costs stall opioid addiction treatments

STATE and Federal Governments should cover the costs of pharmacists' dispensing fees for opioid replacement medications to support patients struggling with dependency on the drugs, the Victorian Greens believe.

Voicing support for the North Richmond Supervised Injecting Facility, Victorian Greens leader, Dr Samantha Ratnam, called on the State Government to do more to support patients from outside the area to access treatment, including opening more facilities across the state.

"The Government can also assist more people to get treatment with heroin substitutes, such as methadone," she said.

"It is often hard to find a

doctor who will prescribe it, and many patients fall off the wagon because they have to pay a daily pharmacy fee."

Responding to questions from **Pharmacy Daily**, Victorian Greens Health spokesperson, Dr Tim Read, said pharmacists' fees would ideally be covered by the Federal Government.

"[However], given the urgency of the problem and the social and health benefits of opiate replacement therapy, the state should seriously consider investing in this," he said.

"It's likely to reduce admissions to hospitals and prisons and would potentially pay for itself.

"If the Government has concerns about cost-effectiveness, a randomised trial could be done."

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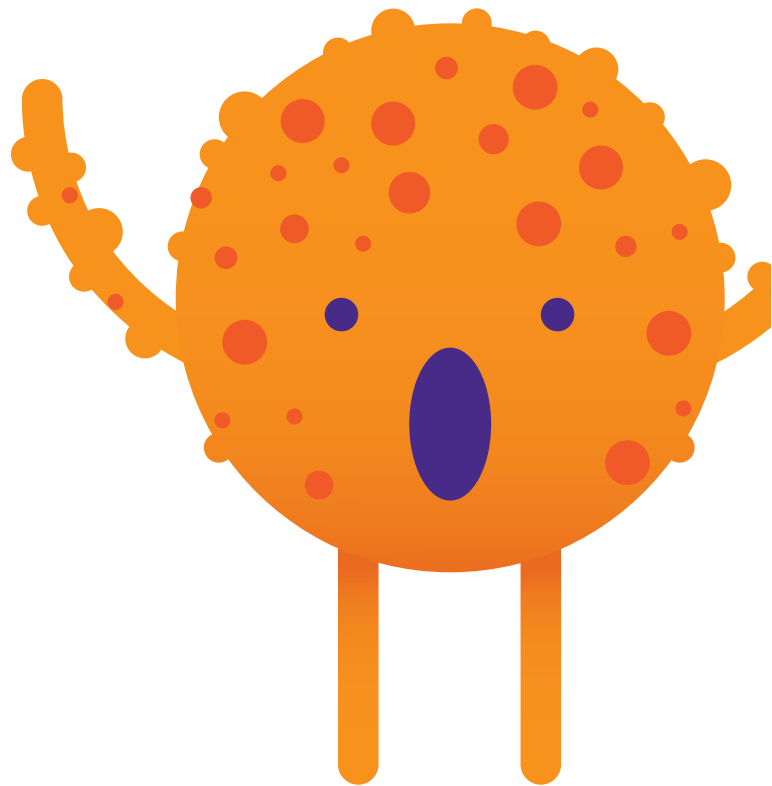
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