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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news.

Sanofi, GSK vax collaboration

PHARMACEUTICAL giants Sanofi and GSK are joining forces to the development of a vaccine for COVID-19.

The companies signed a letter of intent earlier this week, pledging to share technology in a bid to have a vaccine available by the second half of 2021.

Sanofi will contribute its S-protein COVID-19 antigen, while GSK will provide its pandemic adjuvant technology, in their joint effort to develop a vaccine to protect against the virus.

Sanofi CEO, Paul Hudson, said the scale of the COVID-19 crisis showed that "it is clear that no one company can go it alone".

"That is why Sanofi is continuing to complement its expertise and resources with our peers, such as GSK, with the goal to create and supply sufficient quantities of vaccines that will help stop this virus."

Substitution plan 'almost unworkable'

PROPOSED solutions to extend pharmacists' scope of practice enabling therapeutic substitution of medications without approval from the prescriber are "almost unworkable", Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, believes.

Speaking during the PSA's weekly COVID-19 webinar last night, Freeman flagged concerns over the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) planned protocols for the measure, which was announced by Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt (*PD* 01 Apr), as part of the Government's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

"While we have welcomed the initial announcement from the Minister around the ability for therapeutic substitution for both the strength and form [of prescribed medications], unfortunately the way in which the proposed solution will be implemented is almost unworkable for the pharmacy profession," Freeman said.

"That includes protocols being issued by the TGA for pharmacists to follow, and multiple forms to be filled out.



"This is well within the scope of practice for a pharmacist.

"It is a very sensible solution to the medicines shortages issue and we are working now to ensure the implementation of this is done in a way which does not add to the workload of the already busy pharmacy workforce."

Freeman also noted PSA members' concerns around the pace of legislative reforms at State and Territory levels, to enable the use of digital prescriptions following the Federal Government's announce that it would permit the use of electronic scripts.

"I am pleased to see that we've

had some States acting quickly in catching up [with this]," he said.

"They are Victoria and Western Australia, and NSW has also announced that it will start from Fri with this as well.

"We are working with our State and Territory branches to advocate on behalf of the profession around making sure that those States which have gone and updated legislation, that the implementation is as smooth as possible, and for those states that are still lagging behind, we are advocating on a daily basis to make sure that they're moving in the right direction."

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PSA backs calls for COVID tax breaks

FINANCIAL supports need to be introduced by the Federal Government to support pharmacy and other health workers who are separating themselves from their families to mitigate against the risk of spreading COVID-19, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes.

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, raised the issue during a COVID-19 webinar last night, following questions from delegates.

"A colleague of mine who works in a rural location has had to separate himself from his young family because one of his children, who is newly born, had a few medical conditions," Freeman said.

"He said he didn't want to expose his wife and family by potentially bringing that home to them, so he's chosen to seek alternative accommodation.

"He's having to pay that accommodation cost out of his pocket to simply protect his family.

"So I absolutely agree [there should be something.

"[Financial support] measures that have been introduced recently are welcomed, but they don't directly trickle down to the

front line health staff in terms of their increased costs, the stress and pressure that they are facing on the front line.

"There should be ways in which either tax concessions at an individual level could be implemented so those front line health staff feel more supported, or as some states have already implemented, funds [should be made available] for short-term accommodation for front line health staff who have had to separate themselves from their families."

Meanwhile, an online petition has been circulated calling on the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, to provide a "hazard allowance" and a tax break for pharmacy workers.

The petition launched by Queensland-based pharmacist, Pardeep Singh, notes that "while most doctors are consulting online through telehealth and have closed their doors, we remain open".

"It is a very difficult time and it seems like we are forgotten healthcare professionals, and completely sidelined by the



general public, media and Government," she said.

"While we appreciate that the Government is protecting those that have lost their jobs since the very beginning of this pandemic, increasing payments of others, giving supports where available, the Government is forgetting pharmacists and pharmacy workers who must turn up to work at front line to potentially save the lives of others.

"Therefore, pharmacy healthcare workers should get hazard allowance and tax-free income during the Covid-19 crisis."

CLICK HERE to view the petition.

Women's shelter seeks support

PHARMACISTS are being urged to collaborate with other health professionals to support domestic violence services in the face of an expected surge in cases throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

Sydney-based Hornsby-Kuring-gai Women's Shelter President, Louise McCann, called on pharmacists and other health professionals to help women in need to access the vital services.

"It's critical that at this time that health professionals and domestic violence service providers work together to ensure women have access to the vital support services they need," she said.

"Women turn to doctors and nurses in emergency, often suffering critical injuries.

"However, health professionals often don't know where to refer their patients after they have been treated."

McCann added the implementation of social distancing an isolation were barriers to accessing services.

Corum appoints Sallabank to board

AUSTRALIAN Securities Exchange (ASX) listed pharmacy software provider, Corum Group, has announced the appointment of former Ignite Limited CEO, Julian Sallabank, to its board.

Sallabank is currently the Managing Director of a privately owned early stage medical research impact and innovation fund, which collaborates with the Murdoch Children's

Research Institute, and has developed a portfolio including therapeutics, diagnostics and digital health.

In a statement to the ASX, Corum said that Sallabank would bring significant experience in strategic planning, commercialisation and organisational development to the board, from both a domestic and international perspective.

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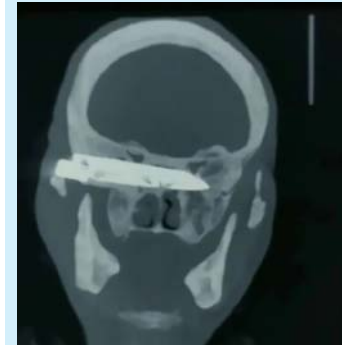
Dispensary Corner

IT'S not hard to figure out why ibuprofen or paracetamol didn't really help this bloke's headache.

Doctors in China have removed a rusty knife from the skull of a man, who's been putting up with it for 26 years.

The now 76-year-old was violently mugged in 1994, with the weapon left in his head because surgeons believed he might die if it was removed.

However in 2012 he sought medical attention due to a chronic headache, and after evaluating options in recent years he finally underwent two procedures earlier this month.



WHILE many people in COVID-19 lockdown have a new affinity with unshavenness, tracky dacks and long hair, no such slackness is pervading the US Marines.

Pentagon Joint Chiefs Chairman, General Mark Milley, has confirmed that unlike much of the world, American soldiers will continue to have their regular "high and tight" buzzcuts.

"Discipline is a fundamental function of our force," he said, adding: "Yes, I think Marines should still get haircuts".

Pharmacists close to burnout phase

PHARMACY workers are being urged to reach out to support services, as pressure resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic pushes the profession toward the burnout phase.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Queensland Branch President, and TerryWhite Chemmart Professional Practice Manager, Chris Campbell, told a PSA-hosted COVID-19 webinar last night, that pharmacy owners and managers needed to adopt strategies to relieve the workload being faced by current staff, as the crisis continues.

"One of the interesting things that we've seen is pharmacy owners reaching out to ex-staff members, people who have worked before in the pharmacy, who'd gone into other careers and have now been forced out of work, or are in a more flexible arrangement, who are very comfortable to come back in," he said.

"If you haven't done that already... start reaching out now,



we know about our pharmacies that are starting to reach the burnout phase."

Campbell added that pharmacists needed to find a way to "switch off", if possible to help manage their stress levels.

"You're on the front line and you've got that feeling of risk," he said.

"It's not something that we've had to deal with before.

"Do not hesitate to reach out to the Pharmacists' Support Service

(PSS), even if it's to run through how others are dealing with the increased pressure."

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, also encouraged pharmacy owners and managers to have regular check-ins with their teams as a group to ensure staff members remain connected despite reduced contact with each other.

Pharmacists can contact the anonymous and confidential PSS hotline on 1300 244 910 between 8am and 11pm, 365 days a year.

Chemist2U delivery service

GP WAITING room screen management firm, Tonic Health Media, is expanding its new Chemist2U pharmacy delivery service.

Having initially launched the service in Brisbane the business aims to partner with pharmacies across the country to support social distancing measures during the COVID-19 crisis.

The mobile app allows patients to order prescriptions without going to the store.

Win with Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away a collection of NS products that protect the skin against irritation, valued at RRP \$36

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