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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of pharmacy news, plus a full page from Willach.

Qld Guild restarts COVID updates

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch has relaunched its online community COVID-19 update service in response to recent cases in the state.

Branch President, Trent Twomey, said it was vital to ensure patients have accessible and factual information about the virus.

"We want to make sure we can alleviate some of the misinformation in circulation by communicating directly with people and keeping Queensland communities informed," he said.

"False information is one of the major problems we are facing.

"We saw a lot of panic buying earlier this year, and we want to continue ensuring... fair and equitable access to medicines."

PSA launches pharmacist PPE push

"PHARMACY staff are at risk" is the message being presented by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), in a new social media campaign calling for greater access to personal protective equipment (PPE) for pharmacists.

Posted across Twitter and LinkedIn the PSA's call contrasts with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's submission to the Fair Work Commission which stated that pharmacy employees were likely to face a lower risk of infection than other retail workers due to the "hygiene requirements and the brevity of contact with particular customers" (PD 10 Jul).

Under the banner "PPE for pharmacists", the PSA said, "frontline pharmacy staff must have timely access to masks."

"PSA is campaigning to the government to make sure you have the right type of masks when you need them," the post said.

"PPE is not an optional extra."

Other posts included the tag-lines, "Pharmacists can't stay at home", and "Pharmacists must be protected".

"As essential frontline healthcare workers, pharmacy staff are at risk," one post said.



"They must have timely access to the right type of masks."

In an update to the PSA's COVID-19 advice for pharmacists, the organisation stressed that those working in community pharmacy and general practice should wear masks.

"For pharmacists and pharmacy staff residing and working in locations with community transmission, it is recommended that you wear masks where 1.5m physical distancing between other people, including other staff, is difficult and cannot be guaranteed," the PSA said.

"Government directions notices relating to use of face masks in public may extend to pharmacists at work.

"The routine use of masks by pharmacists and pharmacy staff residing or practising in areas where community transmission is currently low is not actively recommended at this time, but not contraindicated.

"Face masks are an additional protection against transmission of COVID-19.

"Physical distancing, hand hygiene and staying home if unwell remain essential at all times to prevent transmission, and should be actively practised at all times in pharmacy workplaces."

The PSA also advised pharmacists conducting Home Medicines Reviews to reschedule appointments, or offer telehealth consults, if a patient or household is self-isolating.

Health to drive economic revival: AMA

STATE, Territory and Federal Governments are being urged to boost health spending to help avoid a prolonged recession, by newly elected Australian Medical Association (AMA) President, Dr Omar Khorshid.

Addressing the AMA National Conference over the weekend, Khorshid said he was "putting governments on notice it is time to spend, and not cut health".

"Nations that adopt austerity and neglect health spending during recessions have taken longer to return to economic growth, and their populations have been sicker," he said.

"Yet where nations have increased health expenditure or directed stimulus funding to health care needs, their economies recover faster and populations have been healthier."

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Vic pharmacies are doing it tough

PHARMACIES in Victoria may be exempt from new COVID-19 lockdown restrictions announced yesterday, but many are doing it tough, Pharmacy Guild of Australia State Branch President, Anthony Tassone, says.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, Tassone said Victorian Health Minister, Jenny Mikakos, had indicated that “community pharmacies will definitely be able to operate throughout the Stage Four lockdown period in metropolitan Melbourne given we are an essential service in delivery and access to primary healthcare”.

Despite being able to remain open, Tassone stressed pharmacies across the state were facing difficulties.

“Although there can be an assumption that pharmacies are ‘one of the lucky ones’ in terms of businesses that will be able to continue to operate during COVID lockdown restrictions – there is

no mistake that there are some pharmacies that are struggling and facing very challenging circumstances,” he said.

“The Guild continues to advocate for targeted business support for community pharmacy including offsetting the costs of close-downs and deep cleans in the event of a confirmed COVID case amongst staff.

“This should be retrospective for the pharmacies who have already had to endure the significant business interruption and cost in getting back up and running to continue to provide care and essential services for their community.”

Tassone voiced optimism about the resilience of the medicine supply chain, as Melbourne enters the new lockdown period.

“There have been many learnings to date with managing the medicines supply chain since the start of the COVID pandemic –



with operations much better now than when the pandemic first hit Australia in Mar,” he said.

“Community pharmacy staff on the frontline have done an excellent job in reassuring patients that stockpiling medicines is not necessary and helping minimise interruption of medicines supply.”

He added that patients would be able to travel outside of the 5km radius of their home limit, to visit a pharmacy that they have an existing relationship with.

NZ mask recall

NEW Zealand health group, Green Cross Health, has issued a recall of N95 face masks that were distributed to Life and Unichem pharmacies a fortnight ago.

A spokesperson for the group told *Stuff.co.nz* that it was conducting a review of all its N95 and equivalent face mask products and packaging, but did not specify what had prompted the recall.

“While the review is underway we felt it prudent to ask all pharmacies to remove product from sale,” the spokesperson said.

“The review is ongoing, and we will continue to keep our pharmacies up to date.”

Despite New Zealand’s relative success in managing the COVID pandemic University of Otago epidemiologist, Michael Baker urged all Kiwis to purchase reusable fabric masks.

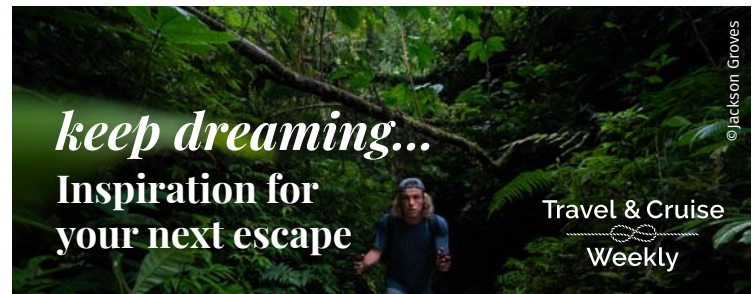


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Dispensary Corner

A GERMAN court has cracked the whip so to speak, overruling Berlin's decision to shutdown bondage and sadomasochism (BDSM) studios as part of its COVID-19 measures.

The court found the city's lockdown restrictions, which banned the operation of brothels should not be extended to BDSM studios, as they offer "very different services".

Outlining its decision, the court accused city officials of being ignorant and prudish in banding brothels and BDSM providers in the same bracket.

"The similarity... lies only in that the services delivered here are targeted at customers' sexual satisfaction," the court said.

"However, the ways in which this happens in the various sub-sectors shows - particularly with regard to the typical degree of associated proximity - differences that are relevant under infection protection law.

"From the point-of-view of the epidemic, which alone here is relevant, it cannot be assumed that the situation is essentially the same.

"Physical contact on the part of the [BDSM] service provider is limited to hand contact, whereby wearing protective gloves is not atypical for the sector".

The owners of one Berlin BDSM studio said they were looking forward to "having lots of fun after the rough times of the last weeks", having received crowd-funding support to survive the shutdown.

Pharmacists' doping role

PHARMACISTS have a key role in protecting athletes from the "significant and very serious" health impacts of doping, International Testing Agency Operations Manager, Mark Stuart, believes.

Speaking during an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar focused on doping in sport, last week, Stuart - who has previously worked as a Clinical Pharmacist at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, said pharmacists have a duty of care in supporting "athletes who are patients to make the best decisions, to select the best medicines that are most effective for their condition".

"Then also support them in making good decisions in terms of making sure that they compete and are treated within the World Anti-Doping Agency Code," he said.

"I think fundamentally for a pharmacist though, it's about protecting the health of the athlete, and that should be at the core of how we approach anti-doping, as



healthcare professionals."

Moderating the webinar, Associate ExCo Member of the FIP Industrial Pharmacy Section, Kerstin Wagner, told delegates that doping was "first and foremost the abuse of medicinal drugs".

"We are talking about our core expertise," she said.

"When we look at the four main principles of the fight against doping, we're also talking about the main values we as pharmacists are relying on, knowledge, science, education and last but certainly not least, care."

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Nick Munroe, General Manager Operations, TerryWhite Chemmart.**



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