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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus the MIMS monthly update.

## APC extends CAOP validity

THE Australian Pharmacy Council has announced it has extended validity of Competency Assessment of Overseas Pharmacists (CAOP) Skills Assessment letters issued between 2017 and 2020 by 12 months.

Candidates will not require an updated letter reflecting the extension, as the Pharmacy Board of Australia has been notified of the decision.

"Please note this extension of validity period is for registration purposes only," the APC said.

## Support pharmacy leaders: Chaar

PHARMACISTS need to stand by the profession's leaders in advocating for equitable access to medicines and vaccines, International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Ethics Group Chair, Associate Professor Betty Chaar, believes.

Addressing an FIP webinar last night the University of Sydney lecturer warned that pharmacists will have to deal with supply shortages when treatments and/or vaccines for COVID-19 are developed.

"Whenever you're faced with an issue such as a new medicine, or lack of supply, or something that's off-label, activate your own clinical judgement and stick to it," she said.

"Reflect on your professional values and create your criteria to enable fair prioritisation if there's a shortage of the treatment or vaccine.

"Support professional leaders when they voice their values or the values of the profession and they advocate for justice of distribution or advocate for universal healthcare coverage.

"Stand by them. Give them your voice for them to voice the whole profession's position."

Chaar said health professionals had a crucial role to play in pushing for fair access to healthcare.

"It's time to advocate for universal healthcare cover if possible, and it should be the norm," she said.

"Times are changing, hopefully for the better.

"I would remind you fair access to medicines is a human right and we have a tremendous role as healthcare professionals to facilitate access and to make it as fair as possible.

"We all have a role and we must make sure that we take our part



and we don't just stand by as bystanders and just look at things and say 'what can I do?' You can do something."

Chaar said pharmacists should be proactive in promoting the profession's experiences during the COVID crisis to politicians and policy-makers, adding that "if you don't have leaders, be leaders, this is the time".

## Blackmores provides COVID update

BLACKMORES' Victorian manufacturing facility will continue to operate during the state's COVID-19 lockdown.

In an announcement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), the company noted its packing, warehousing and distribution is located in Sydney, ensuring it will be able to continue to supply "essential health products" to customers in Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

"Our top priority is the health

and safety of our employees and we will continue to implement and adhere to our comprehensive COVID-safe plans, which are already in place and are aligned to Government requirements," the company said.

"We will continue to monitor for any changes to these protocols.

"All Blackmores employees in our Victoria-based operations that can work from home will continue to do so."

## RB Health welcomes Maxigesic ruling

THE Federal Court has rejected an application by AFT Pharmaceuticals to re-open a case relating to claims made in an advertisement for Maxigesic claiming the product was more effective than ibuprofen or paracetamol alone.

Responding to the judgement, RB Health, the sponsor of ibuprofen brand, Nurofen, said it was pleased with the ruling.

"It reflects the position that RB Health has asserted since



Sep 2017, that AFT's claims of superiority in relation to their Maxigesic product were unsubstantiated," a statement from the company said.



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## Vic DHHS site crashes in permit push

**DEMAND** for essential worker permits allowing employees to travel to work under Victoria's Stage Four COVID-19 lockdown orders, has seen the State's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) crash this morning.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, noted the new permit system announced yesterday invalidated the Guild's pro-forma employee movement letter, which previously allowed pharmacy staff members to travel to and from work during the State's lockdown.

"The permits are issued by the employer themselves to their employee making a declaration that they are an essential worker for a permitted on-site activity for their work during Stage Four restrictions," he said.

"Community pharmacies are an essential service and pharmacy employees are permitted to perform work on site at a



community pharmacy.

"There has been some confusion this morning as the Victorian DHHS website crashed with the high demand for accessing the site.

"The Guild urges our members to review the online information as soon as they can to issue permits to all of their staff who are working at the pharmacy during the Stage Four lockdown.

"Whilst the Guild did provide a pro-forma employee movement letter previously - with this further development and update on the

Worker Permit Scheme we advise that all members fill out the worker permit document from the Victorian Government to replace what the Guild had provided beforehand.

"There are significant penalties that can be incurred by employees and businesses for knowingly [making] false declarations - so we advise our members to ensure they complete the permit forms carefully and to the best of their knowledge and understanding at the time of signing."

## Pharmacist numbers grow

**AUSTRALIA'S** pharmacist workforce is continuing to grow with a total of 32,777 people registered with the Pharmacy Board of Australia in the Mar quarterly report, released yesterday.

The report showed 29,620 pharmacists hold general registration, up 431 on the Dec figures.

Provisional registration numbers grew modestly to 1,865, in the quarter, while fewer pharmacists held non-practising registration (1,274) compared to Dec 2019 (1,354).

The report also showed the continued rise in the proportion of females holding registration, with women now making up 63.1% of the workforce, compared to 62.9% in Dec, and 62.8% in the Mar 2019 quarter.

# Are you concerned about the uncertainty of stock supply?

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## Dispensary Corner

**GOOGLE** can be a blessing for your pharmacy, with the platform's "Google My Business" service boosting online visibility.

However, for the *Pharmacy Daily* team turning up at the top of the list for "pharmacy" searches has impacted our rating.

Despite being listed as a publisher, last month one would-be customer who was desperately looking for a pharmacy in Sydney turned up at Dispensary Corner only to discover we dispense the news rather than scheduled medicines.

Sadly for us, one would-be customer was less than happy and left a negative review.

## Pharmacies open vax to the world

**PHARMACIST-ADMINISTERED** vaccinations give almost 1.8 billion people around the world access to vaccinations, an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) report reveals.

FIP CEO, Dr Catherine Duggan, said the 2020 overview of pharmacy's impact on immunisation coverage, showed the benefits of pharmacist vaccinations.

The study found a total of 36 vaccine types were reported to be administered in pharmacies across 99 countries and territories.

"This report indicates that pharmacists' role in immunisation has continued to grow, but so much more could be gained," Duggan said.

"Numerous benefits, including increased vaccine accessibility and coverage, have been demonstrated



in countries where pharmacists have the authority to administer vaccines.

"Legislative and regulatory barriers must be overcome through evidence-based advocacy and we must address key issues, including reimbursement."

The report found a disparity between high and low income countries, with pharmacy-based vaccination services available

in 47% of high-income nations, compared to 11% of low-income countries.

"I encourage countries currently without pharmacy-based vaccination to work with FIP and its member organisations to organise a strategy leading to the changes necessary towards health for all," Duggan said.

FIP will host a webinar at 9pm (AEST) tomorrow.

**CLICK HERE** to register.

## Win with John Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and John Plunkett's are giving away a SuperLift Collagen Eye Lift worth RRP\$39.95

John Plunkett's SuperLift Collagen Eye Lift is a day and night eye cream packed with peptides including Matrixyl 3000 and Eyeseryl to boost collagen by 100%, and Hyaluronic Acid to provide cushioning hydration, while Rosehip Oil softens and smoothes delicate skin around the eyes. Effectively targets three causes of ageing – fine line and wrinkles, eyebags and puffiness and dark circles. For more info, click here.



Q: What is one of the causes of ageing around the eyes?

To win send the correct answer to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

## HEALTH & BEAUTY

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email [newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au)

### Soodox™ Vytal Antibacterial Hand Wash is a gentle formulation containing Australian Kakadu plum extract and lemon myrtle.

It is formulated to not only kill 99.99% of germs, but to also leave your hands refreshed and cleansed without drying them out. Perfect for bathrooms, kitchens and washrooms.

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## New Products

- **Entrectinib (Rozlytrek)** is an inhibitor of the tropomyosin receptor tyrosine kinases (TRK) TRKA, TRKB and TRKC, proto-oncogene tyrosine-protein kinase ROS1, and anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK). Fusion proteins that include TRK, ROS1 or ALK kinase domains can drive tumourigenic potential through hyperactivation of downstream signalling pathways leading to unconstrained cell proliferation. Entrectinib inhibits the TRK kinases, ROS1 and ALK, leading to inhibition of downstream signalling pathways, cell proliferation and induction of tumour cell apoptosis. Entrectinib demonstrated *in vitro* and *in vivo* inhibition of cancer cell lines derived from multiple tumour types harbouring neurotrophic tyrosine receptor kinase (NTRK), ROS1 and ALK fusion genes. Rozlytrek is indicated for the treatment of adults with advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) whose tumours are ROS1-positive; adults and children  $\geq 12$  years with solid tumours that have a NTRK gene fusion without a known acquired resistance mutation, are metastatic or where surgical resection is likely to result in severe morbidity, and have either progressed following treatment or have no satisfactory alternative therapy. This indication was approved via the provisional approval pathway, based on objective response rate and duration of response in single-arm trials. Full registration for this indication depends on verification and description of clinical benefit in confirmatory trials. Rozlytrek capsules contain entrectinib 100 mg (available in packs of 30) or 200 mg (available in packs of 90).
- **Olopatadine hydrochloride and mometasone furoate monohydrate (Ryaltris)** contains olopatadine, a selective H<sub>1</sub> antagonist, and mometasone furoate, a topical glucocorticosteroid with local anti-inflammatory properties. Ryaltris is indicated for the treatment of symptoms associated with allergic rhinitis and rhinoconjunctivitis in children  $\geq 12$  years. It is contraindicated with severe nasal infection, especially candidiasis; haemorrhagic diathesis; and in patients with a history of recurrent nasal bleeding. Ryaltris nasal spray contains olopatadine 600 microgram and mometasone furoate 25 microgram per spray in a pack size of 1 (240 metered doses).
- **Remdesivir (Veklury)** is an adenosine nucleotide prodrug that distributes into cells where it is metabolised to form the pharmacologically active nucleoside triphosphate metabolite. Metabolism of remdesivir to remdesivir triphosphate has been demonstrated in multiple cell types. Remdesivir triphosphate acts as an analogue of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and competes with the natural ATP substrate for incorporation into nascent RNA chains by the SARS-CoV-2 RNA-dependent RNA polymerase, which results in delayed chain termination during replication of the viral RNA. It is a weak inhibitor of mammalian DNA and RNA polymerases with low potential for mitochondrial toxicity. Veklury has provisional approval for the treatment of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in adults and adolescents (aged 12 years and older weighing at least 40 kg) with pneumonia, requiring supplemental oxygen. The decision to approve this medicine has been made based on limited data. More comprehensive evidence is required to be submitted. Veklury is available as a concentrate for infusion containing remdesivir 100 mg/20 mL, or as a powder for infusion containing remdesivir 100 mg/vial, in a pack size of 1 vial.
- **Siponimod (hemifumarate) (Mayzent)** is a sphingosine-1-phosphate (S1P) receptor modulator. It binds selectively on two out of five G-protein-coupled receptors for S1P: S1P<sub>1</sub> and S1P<sub>5</sub>. By acting as a functional antagonist on S1P<sub>1</sub> receptors on lymphocytes, siponimod prevents egress from lymph nodes. This reduces the recirculation of T-cells into the central nervous system to limit central inflammation. Siponimod spares effector memory T-cells in peripheral tissues and blood and does not impair lymphocyte activation. It readily crosses the blood brain barrier. Mayzent is indicated for the treatment of adults with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis. Mayzent should not be administered to patients with a CYP2C9\*3/\*3 genotype. Mayzent tablets contain siponimod 0.25 mg (available in packs of 12 (titration pack) or 120) or 2 mg (available in packs of 28).

## New Indications

- **Dasatinib (Sprycel)** is now indicated for the treatment of paediatric patients with Philadelphia chromosome positive (Ph+) chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) in chronic phase; and newly diagnosed Ph+ acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) in combination with chemotherapy.
- **Eculizumab (rmc) (Soliris)** is now indicated in adults with neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder (NMOSD) who are anti-aquaporin-4 (AQP4) antibody-positive. It is not intended for acute treatment of a NMOSD relapse.
- **Pembrolizumab (rch) (Keytruda)**, in combination with axitinib, is now indicated for the first-line treatment of advanced renal cell carcinoma.

## New Contraindications

- **Zopiclone (Imovane)** is now contraindicated in patients who have previously experienced complex sleep behaviours after taking zopiclone.

*This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.*