



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

PSA's NT push

POLITICIANS in the Northern Territory are being urged to commit to reforms that would optimise the use of pharmacist-delivered services.

With Territorians heading to the polls this weekend, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) SA/NT Branch President, Robyn Johns, said pharmacists were being under-utilised in the Territory.

"The upcoming election is the ideal time to commit to new reforms for a healthier Northern Territory," she said.

"PSA urges all Northern Territory political parties to take full advantage of the highly trained workforce by committing \$600,000 for a two-year trial of embedding pharmacists into three Darwin aged care facilities to reduce harm caused by medicines.

"Pharmacists working within aged care have been shown to improve medicine safety."

COVID vax legislation needed: PSA

STATE and Territory Governments need to implement legislation to ensure pharmacists can administer a COVID-19 vaccine should one be approved, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes.

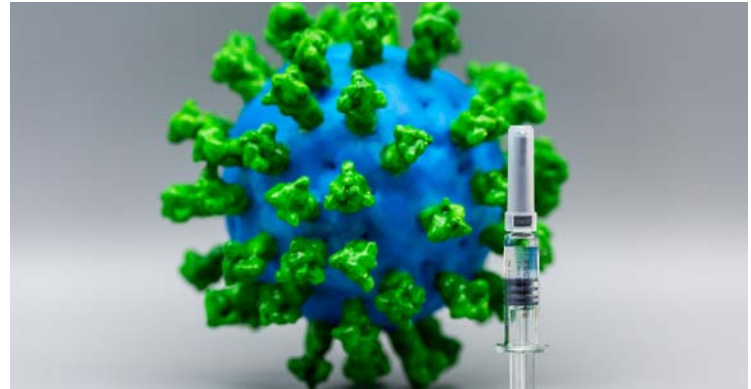
The call follows the Federal Government's announcement that it has placed an order for 25 million doses of a vaccine, which is being developed by Oxford University, if it proves successful in Phase III trials.

Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, announced the Federal Government had reached an agreement with AstraZeneca for the vaccines, which are expected to be made available to the public free of charge.

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, told *Pharmacy Daily* that efforts needed to be made to ensure equitable access to the vaccine through pharmacies as well as other immunisation providers to optimise uptake of the vaccine.

"Administering a COVID-19 vaccine will be the primary way out of this pandemic and we will need all hands on deck to ensure that there is wide and comprehensive uptake of the vaccine," he said.

"Some State and Territory Governments have already passed legislation that will allow



pharmacists to administer the COVID-19 vaccine if and when it becomes available and pharmacists are more than capable and qualified to provide this service.

"We encourage all State and Territory Governments to be proactive in enabling the pharmacist workforce to participate in the delivery of the vaccine.

"Recently we have seen pharmacists have greater scope when it comes to providing essential vaccines to the community and the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine should be viewed no differently."

A spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia noted that the Federal Government had demonstrated its support for

"harmonisation of pharmacist vaccination across all Australian jurisdictions" in the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement.

The Guild spokesperson also backed calls for pharmacists to be given access to Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) funding to provide vaccines to patients.

"Health professionals providing the same service should be remunerated accordingly," he said.

"So, yes pharmacists should be paid [by the MBS] for administering COVID vaccines."

The Guild Queensland Branch will host a webinar with Oxford University's vaccine lead, Professor Sarah Gilbert, on 25 Aug.

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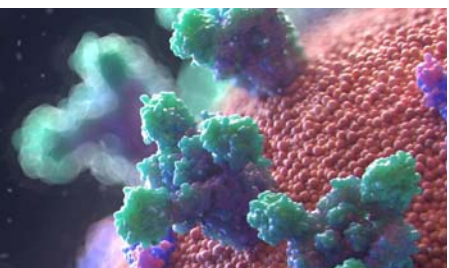
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Reimbursement key to pharmacy vax

SECURING authority to provide vaccination services is just the first step for pharmacists in boosting immunisation rates, International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Practice Development and Transformation Lead, Goncalo Sousa Pinto believes.

Speaking during a webinar launching FIP's Overview of pharmacy's impact on immunisation coverage report (PD 05 Aug), Sousa Pinto said gaining access to third-party reimbursement mechanisms would be key to breaking down barriers for patients to access vaccines and in ensuring the sustainability of vaccine services.

"The expansion of pharmacists' authority to vaccinate is encouraging, but it is not sufficient, because it's not only about achieving the regulatory change," he said.

"It's also about achieving reimbursement for the service to

ensure its sustainability and equity of access to the service.

"The impact and consequence of having reimbursement by a third-party payer for the vaccination service has a direct link to vaccination coverage, because more people will be able to come to a pharmacy and be vaccinated without having to pay for the service from their own pocket."

Sousa Pinto said the profession needed to adopt a "life course approach" to vaccination services beyond the traditional childhood immunisation programs.

"We believe that involving pharmacies in delivering immunisations in general is essential to achieving higher vaccination coverage," he said.

"[From] what we see in the coming months hopefully, we will have vaccines against COVID-19 and it will be essential to achieve a high level of coverage in the population.

"So it will be important to



consolidate vaccination pathways for adults, and especially older adults and patients with underlying conditions... and pharmacies are of course available and ready in most cases to play a role in achieving this herd immunity and high vaccination coverage against COVID-19."

Sousa Pinto added that pharmacists have a key role in busting anti-vaccination myths to reassure patients about vaccine safety.

"There is sufficient evidence to support their safety, and we need to provide information to tackle doubts," he said.

TGA moves to ensure supply

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) Medicine Shortages Working Party has backed exemptions to allow continued medicine distribution during Victoria's Stage Four lockdown.

The exemptions enable pharmacy supply chains to operate at 100% capacity, to assist with the ongoing supply of medicines as well as medical devices - including personal protective equipment and medical consumables across the country.

Arrangements have also been made to ensure the continuity of supply of non-prescription medicines, including multivitamins.

The TGA said the group would continue to monitor the medicines supply chain to ensure access to medicines is maintained.

COVID highlights need to communicate

LEARNING to act fast and communicate in a clear and concise manner have been the key lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic for the Blooms the Chemist group.

Speaking to *AusBiz TV*, Blooms CEO, Philip Smith, said the business was in good shape having managed the challenges of the crisis.

"We've learnt a hell of a lot in this pandemic," he said.

With vast quantities of information flowing from legislative bodies, Smith said learning to communicate it clearly to the network of pharmacies was crucial.

"Regulations were changing all over the place, so we had to decipher that much quicker than we would normally have done, and we had to get that out into the pharmacies that were serving our communities," he said.

CSL flu vax sales surge 21% in FY20

AUSTRALIAN Securities Exchange (ASX) listed biotech firm, CSL, has posted a \$2.1 billion net profit after tax, with sales of its seasonal influenza vaccines surging by 21% in the 2020 Financial Year.

CSL noted its FLUAD vaccine had "preferred recommendations in the UK and Australia", with the quadrivalent adjuvanted vaccine launched in Australia and approved in the US and European



Union in the last 12 months.

MEANWHILE, CSL has also been in negotiations with AstraZeneca around the potential licensing or production of the University of Oxford's COVID-19 vaccine.

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Dispensary Corner

MASKING up during the ongoing COVID crisis has been a challenge for some, with many concerned about the “gross” infringement on human rights that covering your nose and mouth causes.

Thankfully in the era of social distancing, great minds have been working on a way to assist freedom-loving mask-phobics to overcome their fear of putting a face covering on, without having to get too close.

In an effort to overcome the Bunnings Karens of the world, Allen Pan has devised a machine that can fire a mask onto the face of an unsuspecting COVID-conspiracy theorist.

Demonstrating The Karenator’s potential on YouTube, a bare-faced Pan sat in front of the device, which shot a mask at him, and successfully wrapped the straps onto his ears covering his nose and mouth.

Pan then shouted, “Oh, I’ve got a mask on my face! I can’t breathe on you now.”

“Yes! It works! Now let’s shoot some people”.

Pharmacy Daily is not sure if police forces around the world have invested in the technology to enforce mask-wearing.

CLICK HERE to watch the video.



Scholarship more than \$

PLAGUED with self-doubt, securing the Griffith University Chempro Chemists School of Pharmacy and Pharmacology Scholarship, has given pharmacy student, Kelly Meuleman, a confidence boost in a time of hardship.

The pharmacy student from Mackay applied for the scholarship to help her with the costs of setting up a home office to continue her education online.

“I know people might think a scholarship is just about the money, for me, it’s the motivation and encouragement I get when a total stranger shows faith in me,” she said.

“I am often plagued with self-doubt and wonder if I really am smart or capable enough to be the pharmacist I want to be.

“When you live away from your support system this is tough, so it gave me added confidence when I learned that I was the successful applicant for the scholarship.”

Having initially sought to study pharmacy to pursue a career with Médecins Sans Frontières, Meuleman has shifted her focus to meet the mental health needs of patients in regional and rural



Australia through community pharmacy.

Meuleman’s decision to concentrate on mental health followed the tragic news that her brother-in-law took his life.

“When I was told, I also learned that he was the eighth person that week to commit suicide in Mackay. For me that is a statistic that I’m simply not willing to accept and ignited my passion to learn more about mental health,” she said.

“My new purpose in life is to work in regional towns like the one I am from and focus on the mental health crisis that plague these rural areas.

“Life has a funny way of pushing you in the direction you were meant to go and I’m grateful that I was awarded this scholarship so I can focus on becoming the best pharmacist I can be.”

Tuesday 25 August 2020 at 7pm (AEST)

EXCLUSIVE WEBINAR

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from the perspective of the University of Oxford

Presented by **Prof. Sarah Gilbert**

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Lifeblood plea

AUSTRALIA could face a shortage of blood and plasma in the next two weeks if donors do not come forward, Australian Red Cross Lifeblood warns.

The organisation said it needs 10,383 people to give blood or plasma over the next fortnight to avoid a crisis.

Lifeblood reported there has been a drop in the number of appointments in recent weeks.

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