

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has four pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Nova Pharmaceuticals
- Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Chemo changes

PHARMACISTS are now able to dispense chemotherapy medications directly from any prescriber-authorised medication chart, without the need for a duplicate paper PBS prescription, under new rules implemented last Fri.

The changes follow concerns raised by chemotherapy compounders that due to the pandemic, some prescribers will have limited capacity to physically see their patients and write a separate paper script in a timely manner.

"The physical handling of multiple paper prescriptions (instead of a single medication chart) may also be considered a potential health risk for pharmacists, technicians and medical staff," according to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme update last week.

Simplified prescribing arrangements are being implemented in two stages, with the required legislative instruments being modified to eventually see the development of a national approved PBS chemotherapy medication chart - pbs.gov.au.

Underpayment still a concern: PPA

CONCERNS of potential wage theft and unpaid overtime remain an issue for pharmacy employees, as many have worked hours of overtime to support their communities through the COVID-19 pandemic, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) believes.

A union official told *Pharmacy Daily*, that a survey conducted during the first wave of the crisis found more than one-in-five pharmacists were working unpaid overtime, and 33% worked through breaks to keep up with demand.

"Pharmacies in Melbourne are still reporting similar impacts on demand due to the lockdown," the spokesperson said.

"However, outside of Melbourne activity has returned to a more normal level."

Following reports from the UK that 56% of pharmacists had seen their work hours extended, with two-thirds of those saying they were not being paid overtime, the PPA spokesperson flagged concerns over potential "wage theft" in Australia.

"Wage theft is a major problem in Australia and pharmacy is not

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immune," the spokesperson said.

"Wage theft exists because the rights of working people have been eroded by a Government which has made attacking working people and their unions a number one priority.

"The rights of unions to inspect pay records and conduct compliance checks, once understood to be essential to ensuring fair pay and treatment of working people has been stripped back.

"The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) is a woefully inadequate alternative to allowing workers' representatives to play a stronger role in stamping out wage theft.

"Only 4% of complaints to the FWO in 2017-18 led to the FWO exercising its compliance or enforcement powers with \$40 million recovered last year.

"PwC estimates that \$1.35 billion was stolen from workers over the same period.

"It is no coincidence that since unions have been limited in their rights to inspect records and conduct spot-checks in workplaces, wage theft has risen to a national crisis.

"Unions stop wage theft because they protect the basic rights of working people."

New bean on the pharmacy scene

PRETENDER to pharmacy's jellybean throne, or the choice of a new generation?

See **page five** to discover the new bean on the scene.

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Katherine GP closure raises concerns

PLANS for the closure of the last GP clinic in Katherine on 28 Oct shows the failure of current healthcare funding models, the Rural Pharmacy Network Australia (RPNA), believes.

Dr Peter Spafford announced the Gorge Health clinic will close at the end of Oct leaving one of the Northern Territory's largest towns without a private GP service.

Responding to news of the impending closure of the clinic an RPNA spokesperson told **Pharmacy Daily** that pharmacists needed to be empowered to provide more services to cope with the loss of GP services in rural and remote areas.

"If a town the size of Katherine [population 10,000] cannot sustain a private GP practice what does this mean for the hundreds of smaller towns across the country?" the spokesperson asked.

"Pharmacists could and should be permitted, trained, and



equipped to do more - this is certainly part of the solution - but ultimately what this closure points to is a failure of funding systems in rural areas.

"Funding models - and this applies to both the Medicare Benefits Schedule as well as the pharmacy remuneration system - that are transactional (fee-for-service), episodic, and dependent on volume do not work in areas

with smaller populations.

"There are many communities at risk of losing more healthcare services if this issue is not addressed."

Spafford told GP publication, *6minutes.com.au*, that the decision to close was down to the clinic's struggle to attract doctors to the town.

"It's been on the cards for a few years now to be honest," he said.

UK laxative move

AUTHORITIES in Great Britain have announced smaller pack sizes for stimulant laxatives sold for constipation.

New guidelines also restrict the sale of these items in retail outlets to patients aged over 18, while pharmacists will still be able to sell the products for use in children aged 12 and up.

Affected items include products containing senna, bisacodyl or sodium picosulfate, with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency saying it's acting to reduce abuse and overuse of the products.

Additional label warnings will make clear that stimulant laxatives do not help with weight loss, with the agency saying long overuse can result in damage to the digestive system including chronic constipation.

Guild launches IDegAsp CPD module

GUILD Learning and Development has launched a new online CPD module, IDegAsp - a co-formulation insulin.

Developed with Novo Nordisk, the three-part webinar series focuses on the formulation, properties, safety and efficacy of IDegAsp - an ultra-long-acting insulin degludec with rapid-acting insulin, aspart, in one injection.

This activity has been accredited for one hour of

Group 1 CPD (or one CPD credit) suitable for inclusion in an individual pharmacist's CPD plan which can be converted to one hour of Group 2 CPD (or two CPD credits) upon successful completion of relevant assessment activities.

For more information contact Guild Learning and Development on 1800 049 056 or email learninganddevelopment@guild.org.au.

CLICK HERE to enrol.

DoH sets 6CPA claim deadline

THE Department of Health (DoH) has advised pharmacies that all exceptional circumstances requests relating to the period covered by the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement (6CPA) (01 Jan 2019 to 30 Jun 2020) should be submitted to the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) no later than 30 Sep.

"Any request received after this date will not be considered by the Department of Health," the PPA said.



"An exceptional circumstances request should only be submitted where there are circumstances beyond your control that prevented you from submitting the claim successfully on the PPA Portal."

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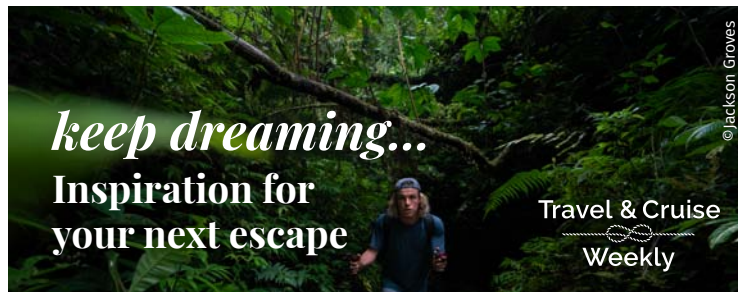
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Digital decisions

PHARMACY software supplier, Corum Group, is expecting pharmacy owners to review their digital options in the months ahead as electronic prescribing is rolled out.

Announcing a net profit after tax, value adjustments and impairment, of \$176,000 for the 2020 Financial Year (up from a \$4.2 million loss in 2019), to the Australian Securities Exchange, Corum Managing Director, David Clarke, said the COVID-19 pandemic had led to a drop in business system decisions in the last quarter of FY20.

He noted a number of banner groups had shown interest in the Corum Clear Dispense and Clear Enterprise products, saying the company's immediate focus to develop this interest into profitable revenue growth for FY21.

COVID vax plan needed now: AMA

PLANS for the rollout of a successful vaccine for COVID-19 needs to be set out now, Australian Medical Association (AMA) President, Dr Omar Khorshid, believes.

The newly elected AMA President, said a vaccination is likely to be the only way Australia can reemerge from the COVID crisis, in the wake of the Federal Government's announcement that a Letter of Intent has been signed with AstraZeneca to access the vaccine currently being developed by researchers at Oxford University.

"It is pleasing to see that the efforts of the medical and scientific community to fast-track a safe and effective vaccine are going well and that the Government has a plan to make a vaccine available to all Australians," he said.

"The greatest challenge is likely to be accessing enough doses of an approved vaccine and we expect that it will take some time

to provide enough vaccine for the whole population.

"We need to develop a plan for a Therapeutic Goods Administration endorsed vaccine to be distributed to at risk groups first, particularly the aged and those with other health conditions leaving them at increased risk.

"After vulnerable groups have been provided with the vaccine, it should then be rolled out to other groups.

"All front-line health care workers should be allowed early access to an approved vaccine.

"Australians will be willingly queuing up to get a vaccine because it's the only to get back to the lives we led before COVID-19.

"There are of course implementation issues yet to be tackled about how to distribute a vaccine to those who need it.

"We know there are often distribution problems in getting the influenza vaccination distributed on



time and to those who need it first.

"To ensure Australia is ready and able to get a vaccination out, be it the Oxford vaccination or any other vaccine approved for use by Australian authorities, we need a national COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan.

"The AMA is willing to work with governments to plan a vaccine distribution plan so that all Australians will be able to have fair access to a vaccination when approved by the authorities."



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Dispensary Corner

FOR months people around the world have been urged by politicians and medical experts to minimise their social activity to curb the spread of COVID-19.

It is sensible advice, that's hard to argue with, and for the most part people have been doing their best to follow the recommendations and do the right thing.

So, when news that a number of current and former Irish parliamentarians, including a Government minister, had gathered on the west coast of Ireland for the annual Oireachtas (parliament) Golf Society dinner last week, the public was less than impressed.

With 81 people in attendance the sporting celebration breached the 50-person cap on indoor gatherings, which was implemented by the Irish Government on 20 Jul.

Adding fuel to the national fury it has emerged that one attendee had failed to comply with self-isolation requirements having travelled from an overseas COVID-19 hotspot just nine-days before the dinner.

Reports from the event claim attendees had shown little regard for public health advice.



Morpeth in mourning

PHARMACIST, Michael White (43), is being mourned as a "great man" who was "kind, caring and willing to go above and beyond" to support his community, after he passed away unexpectedly on Wed, the *Maitland Mercury* reports.

Acknowledging White's efforts to support his community, the publication noted the Morpeth Pharmacy owner's efforts to help those in need during drought and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When the coronavirus pandemic took hold and shoppers were panic buying their medication, White did his best to connect his regular customers, and new ones who came in needing help, with medication," the paper reported.

"Among them were an elderly couple who needed Panadol for pain management, but hadn't been able to buy any at supermarkets or other pharmacies because it had sold out.

"White made sure that they got



a pack."

In a series of social media posts since White's death, patients have paid tribute to his caring nature.

"He was always bubbly, always bright, always helpful and always friendly," one patient said.

"He is a massive loss to this community.

"There should be more people like him in the world."

"I owe my remission to his caring nature of never letting me down with my medication like so many have done before," another recounted.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Dan Hillier, TerryWhite**



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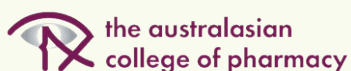


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