

Back pharmacy to optimise COVAX

GOVERNMENTS around the globe are being urged to take advantage of the public trust in pharmacists to ensure optimal uptake of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX).

In a statement released last night, World Pharmacy Council (WPC) President, and Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, said engaging community pharmacists to administer COVAX was a "must".

"In almost all WPC member countries community pharmacies already have a significant and expanding role in administering vaccinations for influenza and other diseases," he said.

"For COVAX that are amenable to administration in primary care settings, community pharmacy must be included as an integral part of each country's national immunisation strategy.

"Involvement of community pharmacy will save lives and accelerate the economic recovery, as the timeframe for reaching

target population coverage of the vaccine will be significantly shorter with community pharmacy involvement than without it."

The WPC added that concerns around vaccine hesitancy could be overcome by using the "well-documented high levels of public trust in pharmacists" to promote accurate, evidence-based information through pharmacies.

"Community pharmacists globally are ready to be part of the vaccination effort in 2021, just as they have been an irreplaceable part of continuity of healthcare and pandemic management in 2020," the organisation said.

The WPC's call for pharmacists to be actively involved in the rollout of COVAX campaigns around the world, came ahead of today's National Cabinet meeting, where Federal, State and Territory leaders are set to discuss COVAX rollout plans for Australia.

MEANWHILE, CSL has announced plans to proceed to Phase II/III trials



with the University of Queensland/CSL COVID-19 candidate vaccine will not go ahead.

The decision was made after blood samples from study participants returned false positive results on a range of HIV assays.

Federal Department of Health Secretary, Professor Brendan Murphy, said evidence from the Phase I data had suggested the vaccine was likely to be successful in protecting against COVID-19, but "the risk to public confidence [in vaccines] was too high".

Tambassis made Guild life member

OUTGOING Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, has been awarded honorary life membership of the organisation.

Tambassis will step down as National President in Feb 2021, after seven years at the helm (*PD* 29 Sep).

Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, formally presented

Tambassis with life membership at an event in Canberra earlier this week.

"While this may have been the hardest year for pharmacy since the Second World War, I think it's been the finest year for pharmacy," Hunt said.

"George, you couldn't have achieved more, and you couldn't have given more to the nation."

PSA ACT Awards

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) ACT Branch has recognised a trio of outstanding pharmacists at its inaugural ACT Excellence Awards.

Coleman Court Pharmacy owner and Men's Health Downunder Founder, Brad Butt, was named PSA ACT Pharmacist of the Year.

The Early Career Pharmacists title went to Mandy Wang, while former National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association President, Erin Cooper was presented with the Intern of the Year Award.

PSA ACT Branch President, Renae Beardmore, congratulated the three winners for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This year more than ever we need to celebrate pharmacists on the frontline," she said.

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Deck the stores

PHARMACY teams from 23 Advantage Pharmacy and Chemist Discount Centre stores embraced the Christmas spirit this week to raise funds for The Smith Family to break the poverty cycle.

The pharmacies' staff decorated the stores and sported some festive costumes to encourage customers to support the children's charity.

The pharmacies also ran VIP days offering discounts on fragrances and Christmas gift lines.



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Pharmacy wages stay static in 2020

DESPITE a “slight increase” in the Pharmacy Industry Award in Jul, wages across the sector have largely remained steady, the Raven’s Recruitment Pharmacy Salary and Market Report 2020 reveals.

Raven’s General Manager, Heidi Dariz, said the 1.75% pay increase announced by the Fair Work Commission for pharmacy staff on Award rates was effectively offset by “a reduction in penalties for Sundays and Public Holidays”.

The recruitment firm’s third annual salary update reflected on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on pharmacy.

Dariz, noted that full-time recruitment had slowed considerably over the last 12 months, while “short-term locums have been more in demand than ever”, as pharmacies sought to operate split teams, or had staff self-isolating.

She said the slowdown in full-time hiring was attributable to pharmacy



owners being “wary of putting on new staff in uncertain operating conditions”, while the suspension of elective surgeries during the height of the COVID crisis had led to less demand for staff, with CBD and major shopping centre pharmacies also cutting hours due to the decline in foot traffic.

When it came to employees looking to move jobs, Dariz said, “candidates seem to be experiencing a ‘fear of the unknown’ with an enhanced

preference to stay in-place with current employers, due to the desire of security” in some cases.

However, she noted that others were seeking new opportunities as a result of changes to workloads and increased mental health pressure.

The report has forecast that “critical” shortages of pharmacists in rural and remote locations will ease in 2021, with “an increase in the number of pharmacists who will consider moving away from the larger cities”.



Dispensary Corner

WE ARE all familiar with online frustration, but a new study from UK-based digital user experience company Cyber Duck has actually attempted to quantify the health impact of a slowly loading website.

The company created three different websites with a range of technical issues, and then hooked up 1,100 users to blood pressure monitors to see what happened when something went wrong.

The biggest impact on hypertension was caused by slowly loading pages, which showed an average increase of 21% in blood pressure, rising from 111 mm Hg before dealing with the website issue to 134 mm Hg afterwards.

The average page load times of the sites used in the study were between 8.8 and 10.5 seconds, with participants describing the speeds as “frustrating” and “excruciating”.

Multiple pop-ups produced almost the same effect, with a 20% increase in blood pressure, while sites which automatically played background music were similarly bad for the subjects’ cardiovascular system.

Auto-play videos weren’t quite as bad, revealing a 16% uplift, while blood pressure rises were also induced by broken pages (17%), non-clickable call-to-action buttons (14%), hard-to-read fonts (13%) and images not loading (12%).

The results seem to indicate that rather than using Dr Google it’s probably safer to just go and have a good lie down.

Tandem alert

AUSTRALASIAN Medical and Scientific Ltd (AMSL) is working with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to address potential issues with Tandem t:slim X2 insulin pump devices.

In Sep 2019, the TGA launched an investigation into the device after reports of unexpected shutdowns, battery fast depletion and overheating during charging.

In a safety alert issued this week, the TGA reported that AMSL has initiated three field corrective actions.

CLICK HERE for more.

Win with Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away a Plunkett's 99% Pure Certified Organic Aloe Vera set worth RRP \$51.80 including their 99% Pure Aloe Vera gel and 99% Pure Aloe Vera spray.

Aloe Barbadosis ‘natures medicine plant’ is renowned for its soothing, cooling and hydrating properties. Australian made, Plunkett's 99% Pure Aloe Vera is fragrance, colour and alcohol free and contains pure certified organic Aloe Vera extracted from Aloe Barbadosis Leaf - rich in vitamins, minerals, amino acids and anti-oxidants to soothe, cool and restore dry, damaged skin. To learn more click **HERE**.

Q: In which country is Plunkett's 99% Pure Aloe Vera made?



To win be the first to send the correct answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au