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Make rural placements mandatory

A MAJORITY of pharmacy students across Australia believe undertaking a rural placement while studying should be mandatory, the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) National Pharmacy Students Survey 2019 reveals.

The results found close to 60% of students felt exposure to rural practice should be a core part of their training, however issues around funding and accommodation were flagged by students as perceived barriers to taking up placements in rural and regional areas.

The survey found that of those who underwent a placement in a rural setting, 50% said they would consider pursuing roles in rural areas as a result, while 60% said their experience had met their expectations.

Despite the positive sentiment



towards rural practice, a modest 29% said they could see themselves working in a rural setting in the future.

Concerns around pay rates remained the biggest single issue facing the profession, while the continued growth of discount-model pharmacy groups was also seen as an issue for students entering the profession.

Close to 40% said they did not believe they were suitably prepared for a career in hospital pharmacy, despite a significant shift in students reporting that they want to pursue opportunities in the space.

The survey found increasing numbers of students have expressed an interest in careers outside hospital and community pharmacy settings.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from Instigo.

WIP breakfast

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch will mark International Women's Day with a Women in Pharmacy (WIP) Breakfast at the Kirribilli Club in Sydney on 10 Mar at 7.30am.

The event will feature keynote speakers, TV presenter, Paris Cutler, and Federal MP, Lucy Wicks, who will join Guild National Councillor, Catherine Bronger and Guild NSW Branch Vice President, Caroline Diamantis for a panel discussion.

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Emergency relief cuts to hit medicines

CUTS to emergency relief funding are hampering access to medicines, pharmacist turned Federal MP, Emma McBride, said.

Speaking in the House of Representatives yesterday, the Australian Labor Party MP urged the Morrison Government to roll back its \$9 million a year cut, noting more people were in need of emergency support following the recent bushfire crisis.

"As a pharmacist in Wyong, I dispensed prescription



medication to patients paying with emergency relief vouchers," she said.

"It was their only way to afford their medicine."

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GPs and CHF back social prescribing

SOCIAL prescribing could be used to counter Australia's rising chronic health problems, a report from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and Consumers' Health Forum of Australia (CHF) says.

The Social Prescribing report backed the "prescribing" of non-medical activities ranging from health and fitness programs to movie clubs and meditation, to improve patient outcomes.

RACGP President, Dr Harry Nespolon, said international evidence showed the benefits social prescribing can deliver. "We've seen this approach used successfully internationally, such as in the United Kingdom and promising trials in Canada and Singapore – it could help shift the



balance to focus on prevention and early intervention for patients," he said.

"With the huge challenges we face regarding rising chronic illness, mental health issues, isolation and loneliness and the resulting costs, we urgently need to consider our approach to

healthcare in Australia – social prescribing offers an innovative solution."

A survey of 200 patients showed 88% supported the idea, but 57% reported that their GP never discussed how community programs and services could improve their health.

Gap not closing

COMMONWEALTH
Government efforts to Close the Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are failing, the 12th annual *Closing the Gap* report reveals.

The report showed progress on cutting child mortality and life expectancy were among five of seven Government targets that were "not on track" according to the report released today.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia South Australian and Northern Territory Vice President, Samuel Keitaanpa, noted there had been no change to funding and support for remote patients, saying "stick with the status quo, get the status quo".

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Blackmores issues profit downgrade

CONCERNS over the impact the coronavirus will have on Blackmores' business over the coming months have prompted the company to downgrade its full-year profit forecast.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) the healthcare supplement brand reported first-half revenues of \$303 million, delivering an underlying net-profit after tax (NPAT) of \$18 million, noting the full-year NPAT was likely to range between \$17 million and \$21 million when the impacts of the coronavirus are taken into account.

The company noted that while the outbreak of the novel virus had increased demand for its immunity products in Australia and Asia, the impact on sales has been countered by supply chain disruptions across the region.

"Some e-commerce partners have cancelled or modified Feb promotions with a slowdown of China inbound and internal freight, which has made it difficult to serve the local market demand with much-needed product," Blackmores said.



The company added that new product regulations imposed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) regarding product claims and labelling requirements, which come into effect in Sep, and have prompted a redesign of the labels for all markets, with one-off costs associated with the change expected to impact Blackmores' full-year results.

Blackmores CEO, Alastair Symington, said the company aimed to focus on rejuvenating its Australian business in the fourth quarter of the current financial year.



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Travel & Cruise Weekly

Dispensary Corner

WE'VE all been there - a noisy neighbour keeping the party going into the small hours, possibly blasting out the greatest hit of Robbie Williams on repeat.

The temptation to go all Michael Douglas in *Falling Down*, is massive, but as one New Zealand pharmacist learned the hard way, taking the law into your own hands is not necessarily the best step.

A Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal suspended the pharmacist after hearing he "snapped" and doused two of his neighbours in petrol after years of disputes over noise complaints.

The Tribunal heard the pharmacist had attempted to talk to his neighbours about a series of noise complaints, but when Noise Control deemed the alleged racket coming from the nearby home was within appropriate levels on 05 Aug 2017, the pharmacist went to the house with a can of petrol.

He told the Tribunal that he had not intended to use the fuel, but "send a message that enough was enough", however, the confrontation became heated and he doused the noisy neighbour head-to-toe in petrol.

When a second neighbour attempted to intervene, petrol spilled onto them too.

The pharmacist has been ordered to attend six therapy sessions with a clinical psychologist and provide a letter from the psychologist before returning to practice.

Aussies turning to meds

FEWER Australians than ever are choosing to "man-up" and soldier through colds or flus without taking any medication, a survey reveals.

The latest Roy Morgan health and wellbeing data shows more than two-thirds of Australians aged 14 or older suffered from an allergy, cold or flu last year, with more than 40% deciding not to take medication to relieve their symptoms.

While the numbers of patients "soldiering on" through illnesses remains high, the survey results show that more Australians are turning to medicines than in 2012, Roy Morgan CEO, Michele Levine noted.

"Seven years ago, just over half those experiencing allergies/cold and flu chose not to take medication," she said.

"Today, the majority of sufferers do so. But even with the increase, there are still more than six million Australians who don't take medication to deal with these conditions."

The survey found 14 million Australians experienced a cold, flu or allergy last year, with the 14-17



age group most likely to report having suffered from one of the conditions (75.3%) while those over 65 years reported the lowest rate of illness (53.9%), the survey revealed.

"The data suggests a clear decrease in the proportion of Australians affected by allergies/cold and flu as age increases," Levine said.

"In terms of the differences between the sexes, a greater proportion of women are affected than men, and when it comes to geographical differences, the ACT has the highest proportion of affected individuals, with over three-quarters of residents experiencing either allergies or colds and flu in an average 12 months."

No Jab laws discriminatory?

MORE than 570 Australians have signed a petition calling on the Federal Government to roll back No Jab, No Play legislation, claiming it is "putting lives at risk".

The petition led by anti-vaccination advocate, Roslyn Wilyman, said the Government's health policies were "coercive or discriminatory".

"All medical decisions carry risk and so must be made freely, without fear of financial penalty, discrimination or institutional bullying," the petition said.

"We will not allow politicians to decide how many vaccines are injected into our bodies or the bodies of our children - that is our right - not theirs."

"We request the following immediate actions by the Federal Government House of Representatives: The termination of all No Jab No Pay and No Jab No Play legislation and proposed legislations; the establishment of legislation requiring an Independent Vaccine Safety Commission be set up by the Federal Government; the establishment of legislation requiring that all Australian media owners, and their board members, declare their financial conflicts of interest, particularly pharmaceutical, on all their websites and in all their publications."

Wilyman previously made an unsuccessful bid for a Federal Senate seat as a member of the Involuntary Medication Objectors Party.

Win with freezeframe

This week Pharmacy Daily and freezeframe are giving readers the chance to win NEW WRINKLE BLOCK valued at \$69.

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