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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today has three pages of news plus a front cover page from **Pharmacy Sleep Services**.

## Supply chain vulnerabilities

**AUSTRALIA'S** medication supply chain is set to be put under further pressure by the coronavirus outbreak in China, the Institute of Integrated Economics Research (IIER) warns.

A report released by the IIER over the weekend noted "Australia imports over 90% of medicines and is at the end of a very long global supply chain making the nation vulnerable to supply chain disruptions".

The report warned the push for cheaper medicines posed a threat to the nation.

## Wholesale face mask price surge

**COMMUNITY** pharmacists are feeling the heat from consumers accusing them of profiteering from increasing demand for face masks and hand sanitiser, as wholesale prices soar.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, Capital Chemist Group Business Manager, Andrew Topp, said prices for face masks jumped from \$2.56 a mask when the bushfire crisis was at its peak, to more than \$45 earlier this month, while a one litre bottle of hand sanitiser went from \$12 to \$200 in the same period.

Topp said the pharmacy group had frozen its retail prices for face masks during the bushfires, but as concerns about the coronavirus outbreak grew, wholesale prices went up.

The group noticed the rapidly rising cost of masks after an order arrived with an invoice showing a close to 2,000% increase in the price of individual masks.



"One of our stores ordered masks and saw the price was \$45, which they thought was for a box, they only realised it was the price per mask when the order arrived," he said.

"It's disappointing [that the wholesaler has increased its prices], because we're the ones who get blamed [and accused of profiteering]."

Topp noted that with the coronavirus there was little benefit in wearing a face mask for healthy

people, despite the high demand, saying hand sanitiser offered more effective protection against the spread of the virus.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, described the wholesaler's price increases as "unconscionable conduct", in a tweet last week, adding the Guild had referred the matter to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commissioner (**PD** yesterday).

## Capital Chemist Kingston ASBCA finalist

**CAPITAL** Chemist Kingston is set to represent the ACT in the pharmacy category of the Australian Small Business Champion Awards (ASBCA) in Sydney next month.

The pharmacy, owned by Capital Chemist Group Board Chair, Sandra Ferrington, scooped the Canberra Region Local Business Awards Pharmacy of the Year in 2019, and was the runner-up in the group's Pharmacy of



the Year Awards last year.

The national ASBCA winners will be presented at The Star in Sydney on 21 Mar.

## Positive feedback on RUM bin trial

**PARTICIPANTS** in a Victorian pilot trial of a new Return Unwanted Medicines (RUM) bin, are providing positive feedback, the program's project manager reports (**PD** 11 Feb).

The new-look bin features a one-way entry lid, similar to a sharps bin, to ensure medicines can go in, but not come out again, preventing potential diversion of returned medicines and increasing the security of the

bin while in the pharmacy.

RUM Project Manager, Toni Riley, said that participants in the trial have been positive, however, wholesalers who are responsible for collecting the bins have yet to provide feedback.

The RUM Project is urging pharmacists and patients to remove medicines from their packaging and recycle it before placing unwanted medicines into the RUM bins.

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## CWH set to deliver with Sherpa deal

**DISCOUNT** pharmacy retailer, Chemist Warehouse (CWH), is set to expand its online offering beyond click and collect, to delivery through a deal with courier service, Sherpa.

CWH Director of Retail Services, Damien Gance, said the partnership with the on-demand delivery company would allow the group to leverage its store network as mini-warehouses to distribute products to online shoppers.

"We are very excited to be entering this new and increasingly growing space," he said.

"Orders being picked up from any store and delivered point to point to a customer's home or workplace will enhance our business and redefine the customer service expectation.



"It's the ultimate convenience."

When the partnership is fully rolled out CWH expects to be able to allow online customers to choose to have their purchases delivered within one, two or four hours.

Sherpa CEO, Bastien Vetaut, welcomed CWH's decision to partner with the crowd-sourced business.

"Having CWH as a client of Sherpa is another leap forward for the

company," he said.

"We are very proud to be working with our growing list of best in class brands to reshape the future of new retail and customer service."

The service is expected to be available across the entire CWH network of more than 450 stores within the next 12 months.

Sherpa provides fulfilment services for a number of leading Australian retailers including, Woolworths and Roses Only.

## ACT to adopt national RTPM

**THE ACT** will switch to the national real-time prescription monitoring system (RTPM) by 2021, the Territory's Minister of Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith, told the Legislative Assembly last week.

Responding to the ACT Chief Coroner, Lorraine Walker's call for mandatory use of the Territory's DORA RTPM system for Schedule 3 and 4 medications (**PD 11 Jun 2019**), Stephen-Smith said limitations in the system precluded mandating it.

However, Stephen-Smith said the move to a national RTPM system next year would "significantly increase functionality for prescribers and dispensers", adding the ACT Government would work with other governments to improve quality use of medicines.

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## Gun-toting pharmacist held

**POLICE** in San Diego detained a pharmacist who allegedly threatened to "shoot up" and burn down, a children's hospital, earlier this month.

Using a Gun Violence Emergency Protective Order the police swooped on 54-year-old pharmacist, Augusto Sioson, and seized 13 rifles and handguns, alongside 136,000 rounds of ammunition from his home after the alleged threats were reported on 07 Feb.

FOX5 San Diego reported a spokesperson for Rady Children's Hospital had said "specific employees" had been targeted by the pharmacist.

"The safety of our patients, family and staff is always our top priority," the spokesperson said.

"We have taken steps to assure safety for patients, staff and visitors."

## Former pharmacy goes on the market

**A FORMER** pharmacy turned two-bedroom house in Melbourne's Kensington, is on the market for \$1.45 million, Domain reports.

The former United Friendly Society pharmacy was built in 1915, and transformed into two houses in the 1980s.

The property has retained a number of its original features including a marble plaque listing



the Flemington Dispensary past presidents.

The house will be auctioned on 29 Feb at 12.30pm.

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## Dispensary Corner

**LAST** week was Sexual Health Awareness Guidance (SHAG) week in Ireland, and pharmacists from the Emerald Isle took the opportunity to encourage the country's lusty young things to protect themselves from any potential nasty surprises.

The CarePlus Pharmacy group adopted a tag-line encouraging patients to "play safe" in response to provisional figures released by the Irish Health Protection Surveillance Centre, reported a rise in the number of chlamydia cases that would make many koala populations blush.

The data revealed a 16% increase in chlamydia since last year, with close to 50% of case occurring in people aged 15 to 24 years.

"Sexual health awareness has come a long way in Ireland, but we believe the message can't be repeated often enough: 'be prepared,'" said CarePlus Pharmacist, Nigel Moloney.

"There are simple steps to keep in mind in order to avoid facing unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection."

While Ireland may have become more sexually liberated in recent years, a SHAG Week survey found many remain shy about getting tested for sexually transmitted infections, with just 9% of those aged 25-34 years planning to get screened in 2020, with data from 2019 showing just 14% of those aged 15-24 years had been tested last year.

## Cyber top risk for SMEs

**DATA** breaches, ransomware attacks, spoofing emails and the prospect of litigation resulting from cyber incidents are the top risks facing small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) globally, the 2020 Allianz Risk Barometer reveals.

Based on the results of an international survey of SMEs, concerns about cyber incidents topped the list ahead of supply chain business interruption and legislative and regulatory reforms.

The barometer results follow a Fred IT blog noting cyber attacks against Australian businesses surged 700% between 2018 and 2019, costing \$7.8 billion.

The blog warned pharmacists were not immune from the threat of cyber attacks.

"The health and medication data that you deal with every day increases the likelihood that you will become a target of cybercrime," the Fred blog said.

"The same applies to all health service providers.

"This is because health data can



be extremely valuable to cyber criminals.

"All cybercriminals are looking for information – such as personal and address information, banking and credit card details, and business information – that they can re-sell on the dark web.

"But health data is potentially more valuable than financial and personal information alone.

"This is why its important that you stay informed about the risks and actively protect your pharmacy's cyber security in the same way that you would protect other areas of your business."

## Win with Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away the pictured prize pack valued at over \$60.

Aloe Barbadensis 'Natures medicine plant' is renowned for its soothing, cooling and hydrating properties. Plunkett's Aloe Vera is fragrance and colour free and contains pure certified organic Aloe Vera extracted from Aloe Barbadensis Leaf – rich in vitamins, minerals, amino acids and anti-oxidants to restore dry and damaged skin all year round. Visit: [www.Plunketts.com.au](http://www.Plunketts.com.au) for more.

To win, be the first from QLD to send the correct answer to the question to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

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Amanda Ferguson



## Guild Update

### Tap and go fees

**THE** Pharmacy Guild is working with a newly formed group supporting businesses affected by high fees for 'tap and go' card transactions.

The Fairer Merchant Fees Alliance comprises four of Australia's peak retail associations pushing for a "fair go" for Australian retailers, especially small businesses which suffer most from the charges.

The four groups are the Australian Convenience and Petroleum Marketers Association (ACAPMA), the Australian Retailers Association (ARA), the Council of Small Business Australia (COSBOA) and Master Grocers Australia (MGA).

The alliance says that when people use their cards to 'tap and go', those transactions are often automatically routed through expensive international payment networks. As a result, merchants are being charged hundreds of millions of dollars each year in hidden fees.

The costs are either passed on to consumers as a surcharge or as higher prices, or reduce the business bottom line.

The Guild believes the current practice unfairly hits community pharmacies and is supporting the alliance in its campaign for the introduction of least cost routing.