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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news.

## Vic VAD update

VICTORIAN pharmacists have been thanked for playing their role in implementation of voluntary assisted dying (VAD) laws, by the State's Health Minister, Jenny Mikakos.

Addressing the State Parliament on Thu, Mikakos provided an update on the rollout of the laws, which were passed in 2017 (PD 24 Nov 2017) and implemented last year (PD 10 Jan 2019).

"I want to thank the care navigators, the statewide pharmacy service and all of our medical practitioners who are providing care to their patients," Mikakos said.

"You are part of history, and I thank you for your expertise and your compassion."

Three pharmacists working at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne have been involved in the provision of medication used in voluntary assisted dying, with all other pharmacists forbidden to discuss the topic unless initiated by the client (PD 27 Jun 2019).

Mikakos revealed that 52 Victorians suffering from a terminal illness "exercised their right to make this choice" between 19 Jun-31 Dec 2019.

## Pharmacists need stress relief

PHARMACISTS are being urged by Pharmacists' Support Service Executive Officer, Kay Dunkley, to review systems in their workplaces to ensure they enhance workflow and reduce stress, and use personal stress management techniques.

Commenting on a blog published by a British pharmacist, who wrote about how he turned to alcohol to cope with the "battleground" and "chaos" of community pharmacy, Dunkley emphasised that pharmacists needed to look after their physical and mental health to cope with high pressure situations they experience regardless of their practice setting.

The British pharmacist said he had struggled to cope with the pressure to meet targets, while working within tight budgetary constraints.

"There is no doubt that working in this chaos has led to my alcoholism," he said.

"I'm tethered to the dispensing bench for eight hours a day so there is no chance to deliver good care to my patients.

"So in my spare time, I drink to find brief relief and I feel really guilty about this.

"Alcohol has a serious impact, which crept up on me over many years of coping."

Dunkley told Pharmacy Daily that pharmacists needed to adopt personal stress management techniques to tackle the challenges they face.

"It is important to have healthy ways of winding down after a busy day such as exercise, music or



talking with someone close to you," she said.

"What we need to avoid is when that alcoholic drink after work to relax becomes two or three or more.

"In Australia we have a strong drinking culture and it is common to use alcohol to relax at home and at social functions.

"Drinking excessively is seen as a right of passage into adulthood for many young Australians.

"There is also pressure in social situations to have a drink; 'go on just one won't hurt you'. It is very easy to slip into the habit of using alcohol to cope with stress all the time and it is often not until either something goes wrong (e.g. a drink driving charge) or someone close to us points it out to us that we become aware that our drinking levels are problematic.

"Even then we can deny the situation and it is not until we are ready to change that we will be open to help.

"Alcohol dependence brings a lot of shame with it which can make it very hard to seek help even when we are ready.

"There are lots of possible

sources of help for anyone with alcohol dependence."

Dunkley said pharmacists looking for help dealing with managing workplace stress can find useful resources on the Pharmacists Support Service website [HERE](#).

## 2020 footy tipping

WINTER is nearly here and along with this is PD's new NRL and AFL tipping comps for 2020, generously sponsored by Guild Digital.

Free to enter, the online tipping comps allow entry of tips for each match in a round as well as a tie-breaking margin for one of the games.

The overall top tipper in each code at the end of the season will receive a \$1,000 prize courtesy of Guild Digital.

The NRL comp kicks off Thu 12 Mar and AFL on Thu 19 Mar, so register ASAP to be a part of the fun.

For more info and to register, see [pharmacydaily.com.au/footy-tipping](http://pharmacydaily.com.au/footy-tipping).

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## Tas Conf a hit

THE Tasmanian Branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has declared the state's first-ever conference for pharmacists, held on 15 and 16 Feb in Hobart, as a "huge success".

The conference, which attracted 70 delegates, began with an opening statement from Tasmanian Health Minister, Sarah Courtney, and also included a members only breakfast, CPD-accredited info sessions, and a panel session with industry leaders.

Among the topics discussed were eprescribing and how it will impact service delivery in-store; assisting patients in managing pain; and helping older patients stay healthy and independent longer.

According to Tasmanian Branch Director, Monique Mackrill, plans for next year's Pharmacy Conference are already underway.

## 'Only agile pharmacies will survive'

PHARMACIES must be agile and open to change if they are to withstand the online infiltration of retail giant Amazon into the pharmaceutical space, warns Secretary of North East London Local Pharmaceutical Committee (NEL LPC), Hemant Patel.

"I do not believe for one second within the network that the fittest will survive," Patel said last Tue at the British pharmaceutical wholesaler, Sigma's annual conference in Cebu, Philippines.

"The biggest pharmacies will not necessarily survive.

"Only the most agile pharmacies will survive."

Amazon filed to trademark "Amazon Pharmacy" in Australia and the UK, with the intention to cover a number of goods and services, including "pharmacy services...health care services, and preparation of prescriptions in pharmacies" (PD 15 Jan).

"The current community



pharmacy model, not the network but the model, is in terminal and accelerating decline," Patel said, saying the entire network of community pharmacy could collapse if it remained "reluctant to change".

Patel also highlighted the need for pharmacies to work together, commenting that the current industry climate was about "survival of the collaborators".

Former Pharmacy Guild of Australia Executive Director,

David Quilty, expressed a similar sentiment shortly after Amazon announced it would purchase PillPack (PD 03 Jul 2018), saying community pharmacies needed to "genuinely and optimistically embrace change".

He went on to say that online pharmacy "can go close to replicating the human touch that is the hallmark of community pharmacy" (PD 12 Jul 2018).

## The Guild celebrates Int'l Women's Day

THE Victorian branch of the Guild Pharmacy of Australia will recognise women in pharmacy and healthcare on 05 Mar at Element Melbourne, to mark International Women's Day.

The Guild invites members and their key team members to "come and network with like-minded women from the industry and feel inspired by one another".

The speaker line-up includes Dementia Australia CEO, Maree McCabe, and Guild Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood.

Entry costs \$40 per person, and includes canapes, drinks, a goody bag worth \$50 and access to a pamper station offering mini manicures and massages.

The event will kick off at 6.30pm and wrap up at 9.30pm.

## Drawbacks of instant prescriptions

WHILE instant prescriptions may be the way of the future, risk managements needs to be the present-day focus, according to an article published on *The Conversation*.

Although many online services require video or phone consultation with a healthcare professional before the issuing of a prescription, some newer technologies that are emerging do not, especially for new health problems (PD 06 Feb).

"Missing out on a face-to-face consultation in these cases creates the potential for misdiagnosis," the article read.

"A person is more likely to be prescribed a medicine that may not be the most appropriate for their condition.

"Many health-care decisions mean weighing up the pros and cons of medical treatment with the guidance of a healthcare professional.

"These online services may



not allow people to make fully informed decisions about their health care."

The article also discussed concerns raised by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, with a review of 22 studies finding that 82% showed a significant reduction in deaths with increased continuity of care with the same general practitioner.

"Digital consultations, however, have the potential to cause fragmented care...a person may 'see' a variety of different providers online," it said.



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## Dispensary Corner

**PRECIOUS** few work into their 90s, but sooner than later, this will be a milestone achieved by a Memphis, Tennessee pharmacist.

The aptly named Dr Charles Champion, who has operated a herbal pharmacy in the city's south for almost 40 years, has become lore around south Memphis.

'Champions Pharmacy' is still staffed by its titular pharmacist, who, despite losing his sight, shows up to work every day.

Champion was one of the first African-American pharmacists to work in one of the city's hospitals, when he joined John Gaston Hospital after a tour in the army, and soon became one of the first Afro-Americans hired by a chain store in Memphis.

Later on, he went out on his own, opening Champions Pharmacy in 1981 on Third Street and Mallory.

"You have a community here in what we call the southwest part of Memphis called Boxtown...had no physicians, no dentist there," Champion explained to local news.

"A lot of people, they're dependent on herbal medicine...I started to refresh myself about the different herbs, and I start putting the herbs on the counter."

It's not just Champion ploughing through the days on his own now either - his daughter, Cookie Champion, runs the day-to-day operations of the store, and his wife of 62 years is the business manager.

## Capital Chemist recovers



**HIT** particularly hard during the recent bushfire crisis, the Capital Chemist group of pharmacies has since distributed \$100,000 of gift cards into affected areas.

The cards have been donated by Arrotex and Symbion, with support from Westpac, with tens of thousands of goods also donated by multiple pharmacy suppliers and manufacturers.

Capital Chemist's Canberra delivery vehicle was also written off in a Jan hailstorm, which afflicted the Kingston neighbourhood.

The group purchased a replacement vehicle through a Batemans Bay car dealer, with

Business Manager Andrew Topp admitting the decision to go out-of-area for the purchase emanated from a desire to help other affected communities.

The group has also booked its Oct conference at NRMA Murrumarang Beachfront Holiday Resort in South Durras near Batemans Bay.

The group will also showcase the beauty of the South Coast through its Recovery 2021 calendar, which will feature the photography of local professional Josh Burkinshaw.

Provided free of charge to customers, a gold coin donation from each calendar will go to the NSW Rural Fire Service.

### WIN WITH AROMABABY

This week **Pharmacy Daily** & AROMABABY are giving away each day, a prize pack valued at \$39.95.

AROMABABY is celebrating 25 years of caring for sensitive skin. From newborn to older children, choose from a complete range of naturally soothing products to cleanse, moisturise, protect and pamper. Offering a variety of unscented options, AROMABABY prides itself on a long history of safety and efficacy as a pharmacy specialist brand.

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Check here for tomorrow for today's winner.



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## Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Gerard Stevens**, Managing Director at Webstercare.



### THE 'SUPPLY' CONTRADICTION

**IF IT** was up to me I'd ban the term 'supply' pharmacy or pharmacist. It's oxymoronic to consider what we do as simply supplying medication.

Aged care especially reminds us that the actual 'supply' function is the tip of the iceberg of how we support the communities we serve.

The detailed process of medication reconciliation is a professional responsibility that underpins society's safe and efficacious use of medication. It is particularly crucial with the elderly who are often frail and take multiple medicines, sometimes from multiple sources.

We get to personally know our elderly customers, their families and carers, and provide important emotional support. We deliver their medication to their homes. We help them to navigate the health system.

And, of course, we support their quality use and adherence to the medication we dispense via various services.

Most of us go 'above and beyond' to support the quality of our elderly customers' lives. But the term 'supply pharmacy' passively reinforces a "pick, lick and stick" perspective.

'Pharmacy service provider' better reflects the many levels and iterations of service underpinning the safe supply and quality use of medication. Visit [www.webstercare.com.au](http://www.webstercare.com.au) for more information.