

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news.

### Sigma change

**SIGMA** Healthcare Executive General Manager Retail Pharmacy, Jeff Sells, is set to take on the role of Acting Chief Financial Officer (CFO), following the resignation of Iona MacPherson.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange, Sigma said MacPherson had left the business by mutual agreement, finishing a three-year term as CFO yesterday.

Sigma CEO, Mark Hooper, said the hunt for a replacement CFO had commenced immediately.

"Whilst the timing of this change is not ideal, it will have no impact on our trading performance or the achievement of our \$100+ million efficiency gains through our Project Pivot transformation program," he said.

"Sales for Dec and early Jan have continued to be strong and we remain on target to meet our existing guidance of \$46-47 million in underlying earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) and to accelerate our growth through the 2021 financial year."

## Reform emergency dispensing Acts

**STATE** and Territory governments are being urged to follow NSW Health's lead in granting pharmacists greater authority to dispense larger quantities of Prescription-Only during disasters.

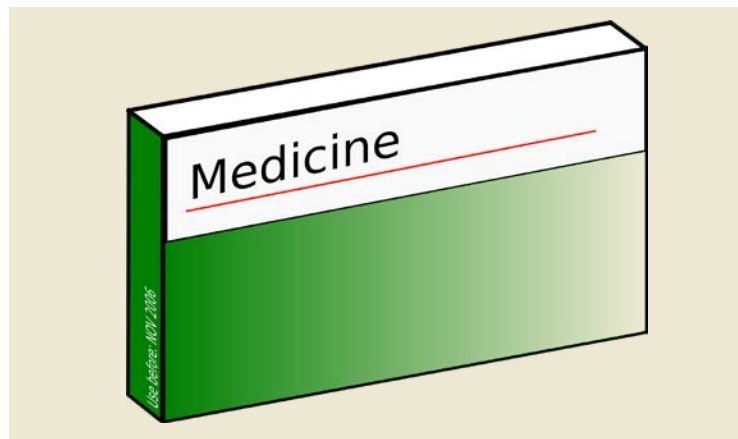
NSW Health announced the pharmacists will be allowed to dispense standard Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) quantities and standard pack sizes of non-PBS medicines to patients affected by the bushfires without a prescription, where they are satisfied there is an urgent therapeutic need and getting a prescription is not practical (**PD** breaking news).

Welcoming the decision former Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) CEO, Shane Jackson, described the move as a "sensible decision by NSW Health to ensure medicines access during the bushfire emergency", in a Twitter post.

"Three days' supply is just not workable in these scenarios," he said.

"[The] next step is to address PBS issue - patients shouldn't be out of pocket for the costs of medicines because of these natural disasters - these emergency supply provisions for a standard PBS pack should be covered on the PBS, plain and simple."

PSA South Australia and Northern Territory Branch Vice President, Samuel Keitaanpaa, voiced his support to rolling out similar approaches across the country, in a post on Twitter.



"All State and Territories should now move to amend their Acts accordingly and set up approval templates," he said.

"Chief Health Officers gazetting start and end [dates] of special circumstances is not hard and it ensures pharmacists are legally protected when we act in the patients' interests."

PSA ACT Branch Committee Member, Olivia Collette, called on ACT Health to follow NSW Health's lead.

"We should be able to do the same in the ACT," she said on Twitter.

"We're getting evacuees from the bushfires in NSW and we can do hardly anything for them."

"Our pharmacists want to help, but our hands are tied."

Pharmacy Guild of Australian NSW Branch President, David Heffernan, said the arrangements, which will remain in place until 31 Mar, unless revoked earlier, would allow pharmacists to be of greater

assistance to patients in bushfire-affected areas.

"This is a great first step towards permanently expanding and streamlining the capacity of pharmacists all over Australia to assist patients with their prescription medicines in and after natural disasters," he said.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) NSW Branch President, Peter Carroll, said the scale of the fire raging across the state had "resulted in unprecedented demand on pharmacists".

"We have heard many stories and first-hand examples of pharmacists going above and beyond in their support of their communities," he said.

"But up until now, the inability to supply more than three-days' supply of medicines to people has been an unacceptable barrier to accessing and providing care to people in these disaster-affected zones."

### GuildCare NG updates Health Check

**GUILD CARE** NG has enhanced its Health Check program to improve workflow, increase the depth of health information gathered and provide pharmacists with up-to-date resources.

Health Check information collected can now also be compiled into a new customisable GP Referral Letter.

The updated program will



also include new and additional lifestyle questions which provide greater insight, a more comprehensive patient profile and updated references.

## Immerse yourself in Myanmar on a river cruise

Read how in the Summer edition of *Travel & Cruise Weekly*

Travel & Cruise Weekly



## Dispensary Corner

A DOCTOR working with some of the world's top soccer stars is facing disciplinary action over allegations of attempting to intimidate an ex-girlfriend who flagged concerns he was self-prescribing anti-anxiety medication to a pharmacist.

Dr Matthew Brown, 36, who is Manchester City FC's lead medic, had been under investigation over allegations that he had ordered zopiclone and anti-depressants under a patient's name.

A lawyer for the General Medical Council (GMC) said a pharmacist working at Stepping Hill Hospital in Stockport, near Manchester, had raised concerns after being approached by Brown's former lover, who provided pictures of prescription medication labelled for an unnamed patient, that she had found in a home the couple had shared.

The pharmacist then informed Brown of the allegations, which he denied, before reporting the matter to the GMC.

The lawyer said Brown then contacted his ex urging her to send an "email retracting any statements", before threatening to tell the GMC about the background of their break-up.

The *Daily Mail* reported the Brown has previously taken responsibility for administration errors after the club was investigated for breaching the Football Association's anti-doping rules which require all clubs to constantly give notice of their players' locations for testing.

## Public/private divide

**FRONTLINE** primary healthcare providers including pharmacists and GPs should be engaged by State and Territory governments to assist with disaster planning, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia 2019 Pharmacist of the Year, Peter Crothers, believes.

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily*, the Bourke-based pharmacist said the ongoing bushfires in NSW showed the State's healthcare officials need to take a more proactive approach to disaster management.

"We shouldn't wait until these disasters unfold to plan, because that just requires us all to be heroes," he said.

"It's chaotic and what's coming out of the NSW fires is it's just completely overwhelmed whatever resources the State Government thought it had and they haven't been able to work well with non-State Government resources, so it's just got to change.

"There's a very strong sense in NSW - and if you're a rural clinician like I am, you've know this for a long time - there's sharp dividing line between the State-funded

healthcare system and what are euphemistically described as 'private providers'.

"It's sort of like we're beyond the pale.

"Over several decades NSW Health has gradually cut itself off more and more from what it refers to as 'private providers' and they've become extremely difficult to work with - and when it comes to these disaster scenarios it's been brought into very sharp focus."

Bushfire-affected pharmacist and Rural Pharmacy Network Australia member, Erin Trelfall, said pharmacies have become hubs for communities impacted by the blazes, with pharmacists collaborating with each other and GPs to help patients.

"I feel we should not have had to reach out for help, there should be plans in place for pharmacy to be included in disaster planning, preparedness, and response on the ground," she said.

"Pharmacists being the most widely distributed and accessible healthcare professionals are ideally placed to assist people and their communities at times of disaster."

## Man charged over pharmacy break-in

**NSW** Police have charged a 43-year-old man in relation to nine burglaries at stores, including a pharmacy, in Sydney's Hills District.

"In each of the incidents, it's alleged a man broke into the premises through the roof of shopping centres before stealing property including cash, jewellery valued at \$750,000, and prescription medication," the police said.



The heists took place between 20 May and 25 Dec 2019, with an attempted break-in at a Northern Rocks jeweller on Mon.

The suspect has been refused bail and was due before Parramatta Local Court yesterday.



## Travel Specials

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Travel & Cruise Weekly*.

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