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College backs move to join Qld Guild

MEMBERS of the Australian College of Pharmacy have voted in favour of a proposal that will see the organisation come under the management of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch.

In a statement issued in Dec, College President, Chris Owen, said the Board had made a decision to review some components of its governance and structure to ensure the College's ongoing viability, with a tie-up with the Guild's Queensland Branch seen as being in the best interests of members.

Guild National President, George Tambassis, welcomed the result saying the Guild was supportive of maintaining a strong and vibrant pharmacy education sector.

"The Australian College of Pharmacy is known for its reputation for excellence in pharmacy education and member services," he said.

"In today's world, and in the

education and training sector, innovation and growth requires a commitment to employ resources and capital.

"The Guild is passionate about the success of the College.

"The Guild has provided financial, operational and infrastructure support to the College to ensure its viability.



"In addition, a number of current and past Guild representatives have also served on the College Board, such is the commitment to the success of the College.

"On behalf of the Guild National Council, we welcome today's positive vote and look forward to seeing the College grow from strength to strength."

Today's issue of *PD*
Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news.

eHealth security

STATE, Territory and Federal Governments have released a joint statement in support of new standards for secure messaging, stating that the standards will be mandatory in future procurement for applicable health systems.

Medical Software Industry Association CEO, Emma Hossack, welcomed the governments' support for the new standards, which aim to ensure interoperable secure messaging across different systems to support the accelerated use of electronic messaging over fax and paper transmission.

"There is work underway on a standards framework, trust framework and federated directory solution which is marvellous," she said.

"We have consensus that these will be developed collaboratively and in keeping with the broader digital health interoperability approach.

"Whilst this can't be rushed, we are optimistic that future development will occur through agreed standards, validation and conformance which is good news for all Australians using the health system."

Pharmacies in line for Gov fire grants

PHARMACIES impacted by bushfires across NSW, Victoria and South Australia will be among the business eligible for Federal Government support through a financial package announced yesterday.

Under the Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, pharmacy owners affected by the fires will be able to apply for top-up grants

and concessional loans of up to \$500,000, to ensure businesses have cashflow to maintain operations, repayable over 10 years at a rate of "around 0.6%".

The announcement has been welcomed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, with a spokesperson telling *Pharmacy Daily* the organisation will continue to offer support to members impacted by the fires.

Equality survey

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is inviting pharmacists to take part in its two-question survey as part of its development of its 'Commitment to Equity in 2020.

The Commitment will serve as a roadmap for committed and concerted action towards equity in pharmacy.

CLICK HERE to take part in the survey.



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Dispensary Corner

CRITICISM of pharmacists during a segment on British breakfast TV show, *This Morning*, has attracted more than 2,300 complaints, the UK's communications regulator, Ofcom revealed.

Journalist, Sam Delaney, took aim at the National Health Service's (NHS's) push to encourage pharmacists to play a more proactive role in engaging patients about health issues, describing the highly trained health professionals as "pretend doctors" whose job was "to collect the box of pills behind them" (*PD* yesterday).

The Pharmaceutical Journal reported that the total of 2,313 complaints lodged against the show placed among the top 10 most complained about programs of the last decade.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society President, Sandra Gidley, described Delaney's comments as "extremely disappointing and concerning".

"Pharmacists, including myself, were infuriated by the comments made denigrating a profession which, on a daily basis, saves people's lives," she said.

"Given that many described the NHS as being at breaking point, particularly with growing Accident and Emergency waiting times and staffing shortages, we should be recognising and promoting the vital role pharmacists play in providing healthcare and supporting patients."

Delaney has been notably quite since.

Sigma's bushfire support

EXTENDED credit, deliveries of vital medicines using Australian Defence Force infrastructure, a \$25,000 donation to a fund to support the profession, and regular communication, have been some of the ways pharmaceutical wholesaler, Sigma Healthcare, is supporting pharmacies in bushfire affected regions.

A spokesperson for the company told *Pharmacy Daily*, it has been working closely with pharmacies in south east Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia, since the fires started in late Oct, to provide vital supplies. "We have been leveraging our critical infrastructure to ensure communities receive their medications," the spokesperson said.

"We have reached out to our branded network in fire impacted communities to offer our support, including through extended credit where needed, and stand ready to provide assistance as required.

"Sigma also made a \$25,000 donation to the efforts of Alliance Pharmacy to support their members who were in fire ravaged communities and were directly impacted."



The wholesaler played a key role in maintaining supply routes throughout the bushfire crisis in conjunction with the Australian Defence Force, emergency services and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, which included delivering supplies to Mallacoota by travelling by air ambulance from Essendon Airport in Melbourne to Bairnsdale, before transferring stock to a barge on 31 Dec.

Sigma CEO, Mark Hooper, praised the efforts of the company's staff, and pledged to dollar match employee donations to the Australian Red Cross Bushfire Appeal, Vinnies and the WWF Australia, through a salary sacrifice program, while the company has donated \$50,000 to Vinnies, and \$25,000 to Alliance Pharmacy's gofundme campaign.

PDL issues S8 script scam warning

PHARMACISTS are being urged to use MyHealth Record, SafeScript and/or DORA to ensure the legitimacy of prescriptions for Schedule 8 medicines following a spate of fraudulent scripts being presented along the east coast.

In a message to members, indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) warned fraudsters had attempted to have

"legitimate looking" prescriptions for Durogesic patches filled.

The insurer said pharmacists should be wary of red flags including patients calling up to check the availability of the medication, prior to coming into the pharmacy, and requesting private scripts or when they are presented at weekends or after hours when it is harder to contact the supposed prescriber.

Guild Update

APP Highlight

A HIGHLIGHT of the annual Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) is the announcement of the Guild's Pharmacy of the Year, a nation-wide competition which recognises excellence in the profession and acknowledges those pharmacies which excel in innovation and adaptability.

APP2020, which marks the 30th anniversary of the conference, will be held on the Gold Coast from 19-22 March with early bird registrations available until 31 January.

The Pharmacy of the Year announcement will be a feature of the opening plenary on 19 March.

The Pharmacy of the Year competition's principal sponsor is Care Pharmaceuticals, whose General Manager Jonathan Biddle said the company's strong belief in supporting the industry it did its business in was the determining factor behind its ongoing sponsorship of the awards.

"At Care Pharmaceuticals we are committed to excellence in all aspects of our business and the Pharmacy of the Year's focus on excellence aligns naturally with how we work," he said.

"We are a consumer healthcare company so being involved in this award to recognise the best community pharmacy in the country is a perfect fit."