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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of pharmacy news, plus a full page from API.

PPE distribution

PHARMACY wholesalers might provide a more suitable option for distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) than Primary Health Networks (PHNs), Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Queensland Branch President, Shane MacDonald, believes.

Speaking at a Health, Communities, Disability Services and Family Violence Prevention Committee hearing, MacDonald said PHNs had struggled to distribute PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Initially we weren't considered that sort of frontline worker [that needed PPE], and I know by reading some of the other submissions, in general practice the RACGP had that issue initially as well from the PHNs," he said.

"The PHNs don't necessarily hand out the consumables or anything like that in a regular setting, so it would be much better to utilise existing methods, whether that's through our current wholesale arrangements and that type of thing for more equitable access."

Telehealth left patients without meds

RESTRICTIONS preventing pharmacists from administering injectable medications forced patients to go without critical medications during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, a pharmacy leader says.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National Vice President, Trent Twomey, told a Queensland State Parliament Health, Communities, Disability Services and Family Violence Prevention Committee hearing last week that rules preventing pharmacists from administering injectables were "nonsensical".

Highlighting issues faced by patients during the pandemic, Twomey noted that while many GPs had decided to operate telehealth-only services, pharmacists were available to assist patients on a face-to-face basis.

"One of the anomalies currently in the drug therapy protocol is a pharmacist can vaccinate, but we can't inject, which is nonsensical really, because we have to inject to administer the vaccination," he said.

Twomey noted that several pharmacists reported that they were aware of patients with prescriptions for injectable medications such as vitamin B12 or osteoporosis treatment, Prolia (denosumab), who had not been able to have their medicine administered.

"We can dispense both of them, but currently they have to take both of those medications back to their GPs to have them



administered," he said.

"[But] the recommendations from the GP network during COVID was that patients simply didn't get them.

"So we had patients going without their osteoporosis injections, we had patients going without their vitamin B12 injections, because GPs only wanted to provide telehealth services not face-to-face services during the pandemic.

"It was completely nonsensical seeing as our workforce is trained to inject both subcutaneous and intramuscular injections - of which both of these are.

"However, the drug therapy protocol only allows us to do those two things if its for the purpose of vaccination, not for the purpose of administering a drug."

Responding to Twomey's comments, Committee Chair, Aaron Harper, voiced support for extending pharmacists' scope

to include the administration of injectable medications.

"There's a very good point you've made, especially as a lot of GPs were hesitant about having people in their clinics, so you can absolutely see the benefit here to making sure we can stop people going to hospital unnecessarily, because they've missed their medications, but you could provide a broader role in a health emergency such as COVID," he said.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Queensland State Manager, Chris Campbell, said Australia had fallen behind other jurisdictions when it came to pharmacists' scope of practice.

"If we look overseas, pharmacists can administer medications," he said.

"We have the competence and the competency to do so for legally obtained medicines... [it's] within the scope, but inhibited by the current legislation."

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Pharmacies to join SA COVID trial

PHARMACISTS from up to five South Australian pharmacies will provide COVID-19 tests as part of a two-week pilot being conducted by SA Health.

The move backed by Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) South Australian Branch President, Robyn Johns, will assess the feasibility of using community pharmacies to boost the state's COVID-19 testing capacity.

SA Health has said it will not be promoting the pharmacy-based service during the trial, however pharmacists involved in the pilot will be allowed to ask patients with mild respiratory symptoms if they would like to be tested while they are in the pharmacy.

"As the most accessible healthcare provider, pharmacists are well placed to provide patients with COVID-19 tests which will allow a greater number of people to be tested in South Australia," she said.

"Some patients that enter a



pharmacy may not think their symptoms are severe enough to visit the GP or a dedicated testing clinic but as we have seen throughout the pandemic those with mild symptoms can still test positive for COVID-19.

"Suitably trained pharmacists are more than capable of delivering such services and I congratulate SA Health for this forward thinking commonsense approach that could lead to testing being available in

community pharmacies across South Australia."

Pharmacists participating in the pilot are being provided training to upskill in swab collection and infection control, so they can provide COVID testing to symptomatic patients.

Patients will need to have a smartphone and register with the SA Pathology Personify website to receive notification of their test result.

Probiotics brand lands TWC deal

PRACTITIONER-ONLY probiotics brand Activated Probiotics has secured a partnership deal that will see its products rolled out across the TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) network.

Activated Probiotics founder, Blair Norfolk, said the deal would increase the availability of its Biome range, which includes evidence-based products designed to boost bone health and assist with low mood and poor sleep, as well as supporting gut function.

"Our clinically proven products are now core ranged and planogrammed at TWC," he said.

"We see a great opportunity to improve patient outcomes for a number of disease states through this new partnership."

Nonessential reps breach Vic lockdown

VICTORIAN pharmacists are frustrated that representatives from nonessential products are visiting stores while the state is in lockdown.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily* that several members had expressed concerns about sales reps who were ignoring State Government guidelines on nonessential travel.

Tassone said reps for a range of nonessential products had interrupted pharmacy staff in recent days.

"Some reps have even joked



that they have been able to talk their way through police checkpoints," he said.

"Pharmacies are open and serving their communities during this time, and they do not need to be interrupted by reps of companies selling nonessential products."

Blooms shares COVID crisis learnings

BLOOMS The Chemist has released a pandemic white paper, sharing the lessons the group learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Blooms CEO, Phil Smith, said pharmacies across the country had been put under extreme pressure as the crisis hit the country.

"Like all businesses, the pandemic took our pharmacies by surprise and thrust us into a real-time crisis that demanded in-the-moment leadership and implementation of crisis-management strategies, some of which we had not encountered

before," he said.

"Our pharmacies faced unprecedented pressures, with stock shortages, a huge spike in the number of prescriptions coming through and, in Mar alone, we served one million more customers than usual.

"Our pharmacies needed to implement social distancing measures and home delivery services to ensure our valued patients received the essential health service they needed."

Smith said the white paper had been designed as a tool for industry to use to manage their response to crisis in the future.



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Dispensary Corner

A HOTEL in Thailand is attempting to cash-in on the addictive powers of nicotine, offering its rooms to smokers forced into COVID-induced isolation at an inflated rate. The Siam Mandarina Hotel located at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport has an "Alternative State Quarantine" offer, with a 15-night stay in a Deluxe Room now priced at 42,000 Thai Baht (A\$1,895) in a non-smoking room. However if you need to puff away while in lockdown the price increases to 52,000 baht (A\$2,350) - presumably to cover the extensive cleaning that will be required after two weeks of concerted ciggie consumption. Just in case, the hotel also has a relationship with the nearby Chularat 9 Airport Hospital.

SCOTTISH authorities may have some difficulty investigating one of the country's latest outbreaks of COVID-19, because the epicentre appears to be a contact tracing centre. The National Health Service Test and Trace call centre in North Lanarkshire has been identified as the source of a "local outbreak" with all staff working at the site ordered to undergo testing within the next 24 hours. If a high rate of infection is identified officials may decide to close the facility as part of measures to mitigate risk - which could put a spanner in the works in terms of contacting the close contacts of those who work in the contact centre.

Pharmacy in liquidation

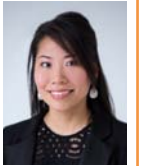
LIQUIDATORS have been appointed to two South Australian pharmacies in the last week, just weeks after two other stores linked to the same owner were placed in administration (PD 08 Jul). SV Partners', Stuart Otway, who has been acting as administrator of the Burnside Village Pharmacy and a separate store in Findon, has been named as the liquidator of the Glenunga Pharmacy and said the store appeared to have debts of \$200,000 in addition to the \$1.7 million from other stores, *The Advertiser* reported. The debt position of the Arkaba Pharmacy Pty Ltd, which is being liquidated by Anthony Matthews and Associates, has yet to be confirmed. *The Advertiser* noted that the Arkaba Pharmacy was not associated with the Priceline Pharmacy at Arkaba Shopping Centre. Pharmacist, Peter Ting, was the sole director of the three of the five stores until 17 Jan, when Yoon



Kim was appointed as sole director. Kim was also the sole director and owner of the Glenunga pharmacy, however Otway said the store was linked to Ting, who was declared bankrupt in Feb. Meanwhile, Queensland State MP Joan Pease, noted a Priceline Pharmacy in her constituency of Lytton, had been closed, during a recent Health, Communities, Disability Services and Family Violence Prevention Committee hearing. Pease told *Pharmacy Daily* that the pharmacy appeared to be a casualty of the COVID-19 crisis with the shelves being emptied.

Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Judy Cheung-Wood, Inventor, Founder & MD, SkinB5.**



Mental health, immunity & skin health

COVID-19 and the recent second wave lockdowns are causing increased anxiety and stress in individuals, families and communities. Those who live alone are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 on mental health and wellbeing. Did you know, mental health affects gut health as well, which in turn leads to other health problems including acne? It's well known that some gut-related health conditions worsen with stress, and stress often triggers breakouts (due to its negative impacts on hormonal balance and immunity) so you can see now how mental health, gut health, acne breakouts and many other health conditions are interrelated. Many studies recognise that the gut microbiome — the bacterial colonies that live within the intestines — are closely linked with the brain. Around 95% of the body's serotonin is produced by gut bacteria and conversely, it's been demonstrated that psychological stress can negatively impact microbiome activity. There's a delicate balance between all body functions, including skin, mood and gut health, and if the see-saw tips too much to one side, there's a noticeable effect on all areas involved.

Win with John Plunkett's

Everyday this week *Pharmacy Daily* & John Plunkett's are giving away a prize pack including: 1 x John Plunkett's Superfade Accelerator Serum 20ml and 1 x Plunkett's Aloe Vera Facial Mask valued at \$29.98.

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Q: Name one of the active ingredients in Superfade Accelerator Serum

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