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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news.

AMA mask call

WEARING face masks should be made mandatory in all COVID-19 hotspots, Australian Medical Association (AMA) President, Dr Tony Bartone, believes.

The AMA chief said the evidence was clear that by adding the use of face masks to social distancing and hand hygiene measures, Australia could "significantly reduce the rate of COVID-19 spread in our community".

"It's a sensible precaution to wear a mask to try and reduce that spread", he said on Channel 7's *Sunrise* program this morning.

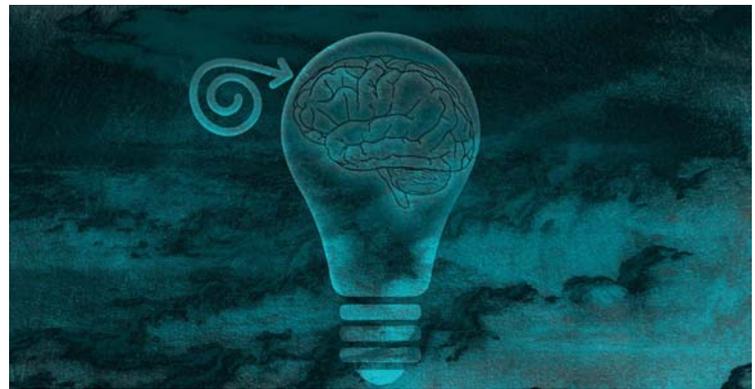
Pharmacies to be mental health hubs

NSW State funding to deliver mental health training to pharmacists across the state will transform pharmacies into "safe spaces" for patients, Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch President, David Heffernan, believes.

Following the announcement of the NSW Government's \$1 million pharmacy mental health pilot, which aims to train 5,000 pharmacy employees to identify signals of anxiety and depression, Heffernan said the program, which will be developed by the Guild, will make pharmacies a "first port of call" for patients.

"We're looking to partner with organisations like Suicide Australia and the Black Dog Institute," Heffernan said.

"[The program] will teach pharmacists where to refer patients, not just to the GP, making sure we're tapped into all the Primary Health



Networks and health providers out there."

Announcing the funding measures, NSW Mental Health Minister, Bronnie Taylor, said the program would initially focus on training pharmacists in drought-affected areas.

"In regional areas, pharmacists are often the first to notice someone in mental distress," she said.

"This training will give pharmacists the tools to support the community, from immediate care through to finding the most appropriate specialist services."

However, Heffernan said the program would be open to all pharmacists in the state, adding that he would "encourage pharmacists to work in the mental health space".

Good Price Pharmacy #1 for consumers

GOOD Price Pharmacy Warehouse (GPPW) is Australia's top pharmacy group for customer satisfaction, based on the latest Canstar Blue data.

The group scored a five-star overall satisfaction rating, with patients giving it top marks for prescription availability and speed, range of products and value for money.

GPPW Managing Director, Anthony Yap, said the result was recognition of the hard work of

the team.

"The collaboration and innovation shown by the GPPW team throughout this difficult period is both inspiring and refreshing and the results tell a great story," he said.

Discount Drug Stores took out the second place in the overall rankings, topping the list for pharmacist availability, with TerryWhite Chemmart, Amcal and Pharmacy 4 Less rounding out the top five in the satisfaction poll.

Pharmacy must tackle structural racism

PHARMACY schools are being urged to reflect on how structural racism impacts the education of pharmacists.

In an open letter to Australian pharmacy schools, National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) President, Ethan Kreutzer, said graduates could not "truly uphold" the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Oath of a Pharmacist, "without there first being recognition, education and

a breakdown of structural racism within pharmacy schools".

"As pharmacy students, we need to be doing more than simply looking at how we can treat a patient's conditions clinically," he said.

"Social and economic factors, including discrimination, play an enormous part in determinants of health... we need to be looking at what we can do to address these inequalities for our disadvantaged communities."



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Dispensary Corner

A US pharmacy is set to pay US\$125,000 in fines relating to potential violations of the Controlled Substances Act, including failing to report at least seven thefts or losses of opioids. The owners of Yesterday's Soda Fountain and Ennis Pharmacy, entered into the civil settlement with the US Attorney's Office for the District of Montana earlier this month, which will require the store to change its practices to mitigate against potential risk of future drug thefts. The pharmacy-cum-diner has been in business since 1905 initially flogging a soda water with "medicinal properties".

COVID-19 indication for remdesivir

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has approved the provisional registration of Gilead Sciences' Veklury (remdesivir) for the treatment of adults and adolescents with COVID-19.

In the *Australian Public Assessment Report for Remdesivir*, the TGA said "the decision to approve this medicine has been made based on limited data", adding Gilead would be required to enter into "extensive post-market commitments".

The provisional registration period for remdesivir is two years from 10 Jul 2020, when it received the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) certificate of registration.

In the absence of comprehensive study reports for any Phase III



trials the TGA said, provisional registration was the most appropriate regulatory option. "Given the urgent public health need during the COVID-19 pandemic, the TGA Delegate proposes to register Veklury (remdesivir) via the provisional pathway," the report said. "The provisional registration

reflects the present deficiencies of the data balanced with the public health need."

Remdesivir will also be included in the TGA's Black Triangle Scheme, which provides a simple means for health practitioners and patients to identify certain types of prescription medicines, including those being used in new ways to encourage the reporting of adverse events associated with their use.

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