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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

## Vita Gummies

PHARMACARE is now recalling nine batches of its Nature's Way Kids Smart Vita Gummies Omega 3 DHA Fish Oil 60 pastille pack size products, with expiry dates up to and including 10/2021.

The move comes after a consumer complaint which identified a number of bottles of the 60 pastille pack size did not include milk as a declared allergen on the label.

A previous Therapeutic Goods Administration advisory had said the labelling issues had been limited to the brand's 120 pastille pack size (PD 10 Jul).

# Vic COVID hardship payment rethink

THE Victorian Government is moving to clarify requirements for accessing the State's COVID hardship payment scheme after pharmacists flagged concerns that potentially infectious patients may visit stores.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily*, that a number of patients who had been told to self-isolate had visited stores seeking to have statutory declarations witnessed, to secure the support payments, despite the potential risk to health staff.

"Whilst this hardship financial payment scheme is sensible in the circumstances to encourage people to not go to work and stay home if unwell – it's intended to do exactly that, for people to stay home," he said.

"When this support measure was first announced by Premier Daniel Andrews last week, there were

inferences of the potential need for evidence to support the application being a payslip or a statutory declaration.

"The Guild contacted the office of the Victorian Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos to express significant concern of potentially infectious people presenting to pharmacies wanting to put together evidence to support their hardship payment.

"The Minister's office understood these concerns and the government has made no mention of the need for a statutory declaration on their online resources.

"A number of pharmacies in Victoria have momentarily suspended document witnessing and signing services during the COVID pandemic which is understandable to best manage their focus and priorities of patient care during this challenging time.

"If a person is known to be seeking



a statutory declaration for the purposes of a hardship payment and they should be isolating – the pharmacy are within their rights to ask that individual to leave the pharmacy and isolate until their test results arrive.

"A payslip is sufficient for documentary evidence of this hardship payment.

"It shouldn't come to this.

"Pharmacy staff are on the frontline of healthcare with better things to do than explain away government support services."

## Vic must learn from COVID-19 lessons

LESSONS need to be learned from the Victorian COVID-19 crisis, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), believes.

While the PSA acknowledged with "Victorian Government's strong health response" to the pandemic in its submission to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, it issued a list of 13 recommendations for improvements to better protect pharmacists and the public.

"Every crisis brings lessons in

hindsight," the PSA said.

"Inadequate consultation with pharmacy groups and gaps in Department of Health and Human Services expertise led to issues with public health emergency orders.

"This created delays for Victorians in accessing medicines, and more concerning led to medicine-related harm."

The submission also called for the introduction of tough penalties for abusing pharmacists.

## Guild backs 'Go Local First' campaign

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is backing the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia's 'Go Local First' campaign designed to highlight the importance of small businesses.

Voicing his support for the campaign, Guild Tasmanian Branch President, John Dowling, highlighted the role pharmacies in the State have been playing in recent months.

"During the early stages of the

pandemic in Tasmania, with more people staying at home we noted an increase in people shopping at their local community pharmacy," he said.

"Additionally, we know that for many people the visit to their local pharmacy provided a welcome connection to a trusted and valued healthcare professional.

"We encourage them to promote and support the Go Local First small business campaign."



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## Dispensary Corner

**GUESTS** who attended a recent house party in New Jersey belong to the "Knucklehead Hall of Fame", the State's Governor, Phil Murphy believes.

The indoor gathering attracted more than 700 revellers and has been blamed for fuelling a spike in positive COVID-19 cases.

"Over the past four days, we have reported roughly 2,000 new positive coronavirus test results. We are now back, plus or minus, to where we were roughly a month ago in the daily numbers of new cases," Murphy said.

"This is a reason why we have had to hit pause on expanding the restart of more indoor activities, like dining and health clubs, where people are more likely to be indoors for a longer amount of time, not wearing masks, and more likely to be in one place for a longer amount of time.

Yes, we all want — and in many cases, need — to blow off some steam...But, this is no time for anyone to be vying for induction into the Knucklehead Hall of Fame."

The pause means gyms, cinemas, bars and restaurants will remain closed.



## Pressure fueled false HMR claims

**EFFORTS** to boost revenue for her employers have landed a Sydney-based pharmacist with an 18-month ban from the profession.

A NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal found Surinder Kaur guilty of professional misconduct, over 126 false and or misleading claims to Medicare via the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement (6CPA) relating to Home Medication Reviews (HMRs) between 01 May 2015 and 12 Sep 2016.

The Tribunal heard that Kaur was not accredited to perform HMRs and had inappropriately used the identity of another pharmacist to submit claims, receiving \$100 for each service.

Kaur was found to have inappropriately submitted several reports to patients' GPs, using the other pharmacist's name, confirming HMRs had been conducted, based on in-pharmacy reviews or discussions, which did not meet the requirements of the HMR program.

The Tribunal heard that Kaur acted in a false and or misleading manner on 26 Sep 2016 when she told her employer that she was accredited to carry out HMRs,



despite knowing she was not.

During an interview with the Pharmacy Council of NSW on 19 Oct 2018 Kaur acted in a false and or misleading manner when she informed the Council that she had visited the homes of patients when carrying out the HMRs, in circumstances where the practitioner had not attended the homes of any patients, and also said that she had not received any financial advantage from her employer for the HMRs she had claimed for, the Tribunal heard.

Kaur told the Council that the majority of the HMR reports she had claimed for had not been the result of a GP referral.

She further conceded that

many of the reviews would have constituted a MedsCheck, adding that she only visited the homes of patients who would have known her for years.

The Tribunal was told that Kaur had approached her employer to undertake reviews as a means of generating more income for the pharmacy, with Tribunal papers noting the store's manager was "consistently and persistently urging pharmacy staff to increase revenue" and he was "complaining that the pharmacy was not meeting sales targets".


However, the Tribunal noted that Kaur's conduct could not be justified on the basis she was intending to help her employer.



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### Sigma's PAAC

**PHARMACY** assistants (PAs) from Sigma Healthcare's retail groups are set for a week of virtual education as part of the PA Annual Conference (PAAC).

The event will take place online next week, and will feature a team of experts and industry guest speakers providing knowledge on a range of relevant topics to prepare PAs for the future of pharmacy.