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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Sigma Connect
- HMR-Healthcare

## Walking specials

HMR-HEALTHCARE is offering a 25% discount on orders of the light-weight SpaceLite 4.5 rollator, for orders of two units made in Jul.

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See **page five** for more.

## NAPSA noms

PHARMACY students looking to join the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) Board are being urged to get their nominations in by 06 Jul.

The organisation's AGM will take place by teleconference on 11 Jul.

Email [secretary@napsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@napsa.org.au) to nominate a candidate.

# Pharmacists' service recognised

THREE pharmacists and the author of the 2015 Harper Review, which called for the removal of pharmacy location and ownership rules, have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Life member of both the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), Bill Scott (pictured), was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in the General Division, "for significant service to the pharmacy profession at the State and National level".

PSA Fellow and Pharmacy 777 partner, Michael Dillon, was also made a Member of the Order of Australia in the General Division, "for significant service to the pharmacy profession and to the community".

Meanwhile former Pharmacy Board of Victoria President, Melvyn Blachford, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia "for service to the pharmacy profession and to jazz music".

Guild National President, George Tambassis, noted Scott had been a significant and respected figure within the profession, serving on the Review of Pharmacy

Remuneration and Regulation panel and as Chair of Fred IT Group.

"It is great to see such an outstanding community pharmacist and gentleman recognised after so many years of service to patients, to the Guild, and to the wider health system," he said.

Congratulating the three pharmacists honoured yesterday, PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, said it was great to see the work of pharmacists being recognised, particularly after the profession's efforts during the COVID-19 and bushfire crises.

"I sincerely congratulate all of the Queen's Birthday Honours recipients and thank them for their ongoing service to the pharmacy profession and their local communities," he said.

"It is pleasing to see both Bill, a PSA Life Member and Michael, a PSA Fellow recognised for their dedication and commitment to the pharmacy profession and the health of their communities.

"Melvyn is a former Victorian state facilitator for the Home Medicines Review Program and a former president of the Pharmacy Board of Victoria.



"Not only has Melvyn been recognised for his devoted years of service to pharmacy but also for his passion as a volunteer for the Australian Jazz Museum as collections manager."

MEANWHILE, Professor Ian Harper, who has been an outspoken critic of the pharmacy location rules, was named as an Officer in the General Division for his "distinguished service to education in the field of economics, and to public and monetary policy development and reform".

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## Patients urged to look after health

**REPRESENTATIVE** of a number of Australian health bodies are calling on patients to put their health first and not put off visits to the GP or allied health professional.

In an open letter signed by a number of peak professional bodies and advocacy groups, including the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), raised concerns about patients postponing treatment and testing in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“COVID-19 caught us by surprise, testing our health system and testing our country in many ways,” the letter said.

“The good news is that the actions taken to “flatten the curve” and reduce the spread of COVID-19 are working – but now we need to take action to avoid a second wave of health problems.

“Understandably, during our lockdown the rates of visits to general practice, allied health professionals and emergency departments have dropped.

“There has also been a large drop of about 40% in the number of

pathology tests being done.

“These are tests such as blood, urine or tests on body tissue ordered by your healthcare professionals.

“While we continue to be careful and take the recommended precautions to protect our community against COVID-19, it’s important to look after the other aspects of our healthcare, and Australia’s world-class healthcare professionals are here to help you do that.

“Before COVID-19 struck, we were already concerned that the number of people getting cancer screening tests was too low.

“We also knew that early detection and monitoring for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease were lacking, with large numbers of undiagnosed cases. COVID-19 has made these existing problems even worse.

“Postponing a visit to a health professional or a pathology test might seem OK, but cancer, diabetes and kidney disease do not stop during COVID-19.

“We need to avoid delays to



ensure any new symptoms get checked and diagnosed quickly, and to ensure we monitor existing conditions.

“So, if you have put off a visit to general practice, an allied health professional or a pathology test - don’t delay any further.

“It could save your life.

“We understand you may have questions about how you can access the care you need safely, we encourage you to contact your health services and ask those questions.

“So please get in touch, make that call, or book an appointment today. Cancer, heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease won’t wait, so neither should you.”

## Straightforward, safe and secure

**VICTORIAN** pharmacist, Michelle Beck, has described dispensing her first electronic prescription through the MediSecure Script Vault as “straightforward”.

The e-script was issued by a GP from the Bluff Road Medical Centre in Sandringham, following a telehealth consultation, with an electronic token sent to the patient by SMS, which was then forwarded on to Beck at the Bluff Pharmacy.

Using Simple Retail Aquarius software, Beck was able to access the script from MediSecure’s Script Vault and deliver the medication to the patient’s home.

“It is so straightforward while being safe and secure to operate like this,” Beck said.

“We enjoy seeing our patients, but it is not always easy for many of them to come in because of either health or time constraints.”

## NZ court issues price-fixing fines

**PHARMACY** owners in New Zealand have received a timely reminder of their obligations under the country’s Commerce Act, with the Wellington High Court ordering Prices Pharmacy 2011 Ltd and its Director, Stuart Heberd, to pay fines totalling NZ\$394,000, in relation to their role in a price-fixing breach.

The Nelson-based business and its directors were found to have facilitated a price-fixing arrangement with competing pharmacies in the region in May

2016, which saw patients pay NZ\$6 instead of NZ\$5 for their prescription items.

Welcoming the decision, Commerce Commission NZ Chair, Anna Rawlings, said that while Heberd and Prices Pharmacy 2011 Ltd did not intend to breach the Act and were motivated by a perceived under-funding of prescription medicines by the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board, she noted that price-fixing will become a criminal offence from Apr 2021.

## WHO resumes hydroxychloroquine trial

**THE** World Health Organization (WHO) has resumed the hydroxychloroquine arm of its SOLIDARITY Trial following a review of mortality rates by the study’s Data Safety and Monitoring Committee (DSMC).

The trial had been paused as a result of concerns heralded by research published in *The Lancet* on 22 May (**PD** 26 May), indicating the use of hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine for the treatment of patients with COVID-19 was associated with an increased

risk of serious heart rhythm complications and a decrease in in-hospital survival.

*The Lancet* study has since been retracted, after experts flagged “serious scientific questions” over the data used, and the authors declined to provide the full data set for peer review.

The DSMC’s review of the SOLIDARITY Trial hydroxychloroquine arm, has found no reason to modify protocols and backed the continuation of the trial.



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## Dispensary Corner

**TWO** out of five Americans have engaged in inappropriate use of bleach during the coronavirus crisis, according to a new study released on Fri by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The agency said it undertook a survey about what people were using bleach for after an unusual spike in poison control centre calls in Apr.

The weekly CDC Morbidity and Mortality Report found that 60% of people overall were doing more cleaning and disinfecting amid the pandemic.

That's good news, but the CDC said it was particularly alarmed at a spike in practices that it considers to be high risk, including washing fruits, vegetables and other foods in bleach solutions.

18% of respondents admitted to using household cleaners - rather than soap - to wash their hands and/or other body parts, while 10% said they had "misted themselves" with cleaning products and disinfectants after being out in public.

And it gets worse - about 6% admitted to inhaling bleach vapour, while 4% had "drank or gargled" a household cleaner, diluted bleach solution or soapy water in attempts to avoid coronavirus infection.

The CDC said the results highlighted significant US knowledge gaps about hygiene.

Unsurprisingly a quarter of respondents also reported negative side effects from exposure to cleaning products, such as skin irritation, nausea, dizziness and breathing issues.

## COVID vax cap reduction

**BRITISH** pharmacists are being warned that COVID-19 infection control measures could significantly reduce their capacity to support influenza vaccination campaigns this year.

Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Local Pharmaceutical Committee CEO, Rekha Shah, told *The Pharmaceutical Journal* that community pharmacists may see their vaccination capacity slashed by 66% ahead of the Northern Hemisphere's 2020/21 flu season.

Shah said pharmacist immunisers were likely to have to change personal protective equipment, such as gloves and aprons, between patients, as well as disinfecting surfaces.

"[This] means our capacity might be reduced in terms of how many people we can vaccinate in a day, compared to what we were doing before," she said.

"Say you were going to do 50 - we're talking about one third of that [depending on Government requirements]."

Shah also warned a second wave of the virus could further hinder pharmacists' ability to immunise the community, despite a forecast



increase in demand for the flu jab.

"Until we get more information about the service specification - the expectations and the funding - it is very, very difficult to tell our pharmacies what it is they need to start doing and ordering," she said.

Pharmaceutical Service Negotiation Committee CEO, Simon Dukes, said COVID-19 represented a challenge for the profession, particularly around the business model for vaccination services.

"We've got to think about our model and how we can vaccinate more at scale to make sure that we participate as fully as we can in a vaccination programme that will inevitably be larger than usual," he said.

## Study to investigate COVID racism

**CHARLES** Sturt University has awarded \$30,000 for research to investigate the connection between COVID-19-related racism and healthcare access in four regional NSW communities.

Researchers from the university will assess whether people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have experienced racism during the pandemic, and if this discrimination has affected their

healthcare access and equity.

The study is being conducted in Albury-Wodonga, Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Young, by Charles Sturt School of Nursing, Midwifery and Indigenous Health, Professor Julian Grant, and her colleague, Dr Jessica Biles.

Grant noted that previous research had found that people in regional areas have poorer access to healthcare.

## Covid breath test

**ISRAELI** researchers have developed a one-minute coronavirus breath test, with a 90% success rate in early trials.

## Guild Update

### ACCC authorisation

**PHARMACY** owners are reminded that there is an interim authorisation by the ACCC which enables pharmacies adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to discuss, share information and collectively negotiate with landlords regarding the support to be provided to tenants by landlords.

The authorisation also enables landlords to make agreements as to the nature of the relief to be offered to small and medium-sized enterprise tenants, such as pharmacies.

The ACCC also is currently consulting with interested parties on the following:

If you have been directly affected by the conduct under the interim authorisation granted by the ACCC on 19 May 2020, what is your experience to date.

Do you have any comments on the likely public benefits and detriments from the proposed conduct, whether the ACCC should authorise the conduct for a further 12 months, and whether any conditions should be placed on the authorisation.

More details are available on the [ACCC website](#).

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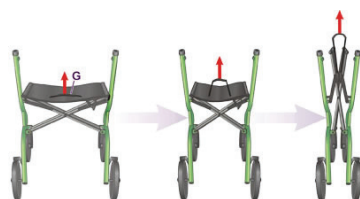
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