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See **page five** for more.

Footy tipping off

PHARMACY Daily's 2020 AFL and NRL tipping competitions have been cancelled due to the uncertainty around the seasons and potential ongoing schedule changes.

We hope to have the tipping competitions back in 2021.

\$2.1b 6CPA underspending forecast

FEDERAL Government spending on the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement (6CPA) is expected to fall \$2.1 billion short of the forecast \$18.9 billion, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

With the 6CPA set to expire on 30 Jun, a Guild spokesperson revealed the total Government spend on the five-year deal was likely to reach \$16.8 billion, when remuneration for dispensing, professional pharmacy programs, NDSS funding, wholesaler mark-up and the Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding for wholesalers was combined.

"I know what you're thinking – what about the headline figure of \$18.9 billion that was put around at the time of the signing of the 6CPA in 2015," the spokesperson said.

"Well, as we know only too well in the current economic environment, forecasts and estimates entail a bit of educated guesswork and fortunetelling, which explains their frequent inaccuracy despite best intentions.

"Professional pharmacy programs look to have received \$1.1 billion in funding over the five years, around \$100 million below the forecast.

"As the sun sets on 6CPA, it should be remembered as a reforming agreement, which provided patient

benefit as well as new stability and certainty for 5,800 local community pharmacies.

"The highly innovative and beneficial Administration, Handling and Infrastructure (AHI) fee put a floor under PBS prices to ensure that the price disclosure process did not undermine the viability of dispensing and threaten consumer access to medicines.

"The 6CPA provided a significant boost – a doubling in fact - in professional pharmacy program funding, which has translated into direct patient benefit for half a decade.

"It also laid the groundwork for the imminent 7CPA, which is once again being negotiated between the Commonwealth and the Pharmacy Guild with a mutual focus on patient benefit, support for the PBS, and the viability of the highly trusted and respected network of community pharmacies."

While details of the 7CPA are yet to be confirmed, Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, told the Guild's Annual Parliamentary Dinner that the new deal would deliver certainty for community pharmacy and reduce fluctuations in



payments, providing "remuneration you can bank on" (PD 12 Sep 2019).

"We're developing a model to set the remuneration, through negotiations and discussions, which we believe will be fair and reasonable," he said.

"You'll know what you will receive, so you can see over the next five years this is the amount, and this time that amount will effectively be guaranteed."

MEANWHILE, delegates watching last night's Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) weekly webinar were told that regular host and PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, was unable to moderate discussions on electronic prescriptions as he was locked in talks with the Department of Health over the 7CPA.



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UK closures rise

BRITISH pharmacies are feeling the financial pressure of declining foot traffic resulting from COVID-19, *The Pharmaceutical Journal* reports.

Data from the National Health Service (NHS) Digital, revealed a total 83 pharmacies across the UK have shut down since the start of the year, with 42 closing since 23 Mar, when the COVID-19 lockdown came into force.

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee CEO, Simon Dukes, said the pharmacy sector had been “underfunded for several years and the additional pressure from the pandemic has only exacerbated pre-existing cost and capacity issues”.

“This has inevitably pushed some less financially secure pharmacies over the edge,” he said.

Patient safety critical for COVID cures

AUSTRALIAN and British pharmacologists are calling on researchers developing potential treatments for COVID-19 to adopt five core principles to ensure patient safety.

In a joint statement published in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, experts from Monash University, the University of Sydney and the British Pharmacological Society, flagged concerns that many of the clinical trials, which are currently underway to develop a treatment for COVID-19 “do not include the information that is needed to safely translate a promising treatment from research to clinical practice”.

Australian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists President, Dr Danijela Gnjidic, said the clinical pharmacology community was well placed to guide research for a cure.

“Clinical pharmacologists are experts in the development and use of medicines: the principles we use can help establish not just whether a drug will work but crucially, whether it will be safe,” she said.

“We hope that the principles outlined in this statement will help funders, researchers, media and policy makers navigate the known challenges of drug discovery and development.”

British Pharmacological Society President, Sir Munir Pirmohamed, said the principles highlighted in the statement would “ultimately help develop drugs that can be used for the treatment of COVID-19”.

“It is all very well if a treatment works in vitro – but if it cannot reach effective doses in the lung or other target organs, or if it is toxic, it will fail,” he said.

The five principles are:

1. The drug must work against

the virus in cells or animal models at doses which are relevant for humans.

2. The amount of drug reaching the cells and organs affected by the virus must be adequate to either kill the virus and/or reduce inflammation.
3. There needs to be a good understanding of how the virus infects and multiplies within the body and how this relates to the clinical features of COVID-19.
4. The information from the above three principles should be used to define the optimal doses and duration of therapy (or therapies when more than one drug is used).
5. Well-designed trials must be undertaken to show that the drug works in treating the disease and is safe.

Students urged to get involved early

PHARMACY students who want to pursue a career in the hospital setting are being encouraged not to wait until they have graduated to get involved in the profession.

Speaking at the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Connect webinar last week, hospital pharmacist, Nicole Dilworth, said, “it’s not what you know, it is who knows you”, when it comes to getting a foot in the door at a hospital pharmacy.

“It’s really important to get involved in the pharmacy profession, not just when you’re a pharmacist, but when you’re a student,” she said.

“Putting yourself out there, scary and intimidating as that

might be when you are still a student, it can be really helpful and it can build your confidence.”

Dilworth said the hospital pharmacy jobs market was “quite a competitive space”, and “one of the key things [to securing a role] is having some experience in pharmacy”.

She added that aspiring hospital pharmacists should pay particular attention to “things like the selection criteria for government positions”.

“Giving selection criteria enough time to think about your answers, back up what you’re saying is really important when you’re applying for a hospital pharmacy role,” she said.

Pharmacies hit by smash-and-grab

QUEENSLAND Police are investigating two recent smash-and-grab burglaries at pharmacies in the state.

Thieves crashed through the door of the Capri Pharmacy on the Gold Coast, with police noting that an “unknown quantity” of medications had been stolen, local news website myGC.com.au reported.

Goombungee Pharmacy in Darling Downs was also targeted earlier this month, with police now looking for an “unknown number of offenders”, who broke into the store during a smash-and-grab raid.

The break-ins follow a spate of similar attacks on pharmacies in



the state’s south-east.

Biggera Waters pharmacist, Amin Javanmard, expressed concerns that the Palaszczuk Government’s decision to close the state’s borders had also cut access to illegal prescription medications, making local pharmacies a target for criminals seeking to get their hands on scheduled medicines (*PD 27 May*).

Do you want to understand the current state of the pharmacy industry?



A general pharmacy update, highlighting strategic and financial considerations post COVID-19

Complimentary Webinar

Hosted by instigo’s General Manager, Andrew Pattinson & Felicity Crimston, Partner, Pitcher Partners on Wednesday 24th June, 10:00am

Contact mannon@instigo.com.au to sign up or for more information



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Dispensary Corner

KANSAS pharmacist, Tamara Jo Nyachira, has clearly been listening to US President, Donald Trump, rather than his Pharmaceutical Society of Australia peer, Dr Chris Freeman, when it comes to the use of hydroxychloroquine.

While Freeman has been urging Australian pharmacists to exercise caution when dispensing the anti-malaria, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus treatment, following reports that it could prevent and treat COVID-19, the 40-year-old has been caught helping herself to the medication using faked prescriptions, US authorities revealed.

Prosecutors allege that in Mar, Nyachira had used a number of forged scripts to gain access to supplies of antibiotics and hydroxychloroquine.

They also claim the pharmacist fraudulently obtained a codeine-based medication, the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* reported.

If convicted Nyachira will face a fine of up to US\$250,000 and three years behind bars for each charge relating to forged scripts for anti-infection medications, while the controlled substance charge carries a penalty of up to four years imprisonment.



Pharmacy owners waiting on 7CPA

MANY pharmacy owners are holding off putting their store on the market until the details of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) are announced, Attain Business Brokers Director, Natalie Sirianni, believes.

Speaking as part of the latest *Sirianni Market Update*, alongside Medici Capital Managing Director, Frank Sirianni, Natalie said that while sales of pharmacies which were listed prior to the COVID-19 outbreak were progressing, "a number of pharmacy owners are waiting for the 7CPA to be signed" before listing their business.

"What we anticipate is that as soon as the 7CPA gets signed we'll see an influx of businesses that come to market," she said.

"That's generally what we see when every CPA gets signed, so that's nothing unusual."

Although Sirianni said transactions were continuing to be completed during the COVID crisis, she noted that some locations were being



more heavily impacted by the affects of the pandemic than others, prompting would-be buyers to take a deeper look at pharmacies prior to buying.

"What we're finding is a lot of transactions that are in play or were in play as COVID came on the scene are still progressing," she said.

"Some have had a few delays, but over the last couple of months we've settled on a number of pharmacies and they've all gone

through very smoothly.

"A lot of buyers are doing a little bit more due diligence work, more investigation and a lot of them are relying on the Feb figures rather than the panic-buying month of Mar, but only time will tell how that all pans out.

"All-in-all the market's still quite strong, and the big thing on the horizon is once the 7CPA gets signed we'll hopefully see some more businesses come to market."

PSWA Board

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Western Australia (PSWA) has announced the re-election of former Pharmaceutical Society of Australia WA Branch President, Teresa Di Franco, and 2017 Eric Kirk Memorial Award winner, Pascale Ng Cheong Tin, to the board, following the organisation's Annual General Meeting.

Ng Cheong Tin is Chair of the PSWA's Performance Review and Remuneration Sub-committee, while Di France sits on the organisation's Governance Sub-committee.

Amcal connects in a time of COVID-19

PHARMACISTS and pharmacy assistants from across the Amcal network are celebrating their teams' contributions to supporting communities around the country during the COVID-19 crisis through the banner group's new team selfie initiative.

Amcal head, Kurt O'Brien, praised the dedication of staff across the network to the health and wellbeing of patients during the pandemic.

O'Brien said the selfie initiative was a way of connecting pharmacy staff from different stores across the country.

"Pharmacies are at the frontline



of community healthcare and remain pivotal in supporting Australians better understand and manage their health," he said.

"When it came to celebrating our pharmacy champions, we wanted to find a way to show the collective face of our dedicated, selfless, and proud pharmacy family."

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