

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **Sigma**.

Change needed in leadership

PHARMACY needs to implement structural change to boost female influence in leadership roles, an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar was told last night.

New York-based pharmacy academic, Dr Vibhuti Arya, said traditional leadership models have "built-in structures that are harmful for even the women who do make it to the table".

"You can have women at the table but it won't really set them up for success unless you have structural support for them," she said.

'Hard fought' 7CPA to boost funding

PHARMACISTS are set to see a 9% increase in dispensing remuneration over the next five years under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) (**PD** breaking news).

While final figures around 7CPA funding have yet to be announced, the deal, signed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, and Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, last night, is set to see dispensing remuneration increase to \$7.74 per prescription from 01 Jul, with annual indexed fee increases to be implemented throughout the deal's five-year life.

Signed in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the summer's bushfire crisis, Tambassis, described the 7CPA as "an agreement for the times".

A number of sources close to negotiations have described the 7CPA as "hard fought", with Guild

Vice President, Trent Twomey, calling it an "epic negotiation process".

"I am confident that the outcome is in the best interests of Australian patients and local community pharmacies," he said.

"The agreement we have arrived at contains a number of relevant reforms that will benefit patients for many years to come."

Speaking to **Pharmacy Daily**, 7CPA co-signatory Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, described the deal as "a step forward from the 6CPA".

"It delivers an increase in investment in areas where it is needed most," he said.

"In my mind that's predominantly for people who are living in rural, regional and remote areas, but also for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

Freeman added the 7CPA has "flexibility built into it" to allow



the Government and community pharmacy "to adapt to the changing health environment".

"I think pharmacists would appreciate how quickly that changes - almost overnight at the moment, with either different health policies or the health environment more broadly changing quite rapidly," he said.

"This is a five-year agreement so it needs the ability to adapt to these things."

Key features of the 7CPA for pharmacy

HERE are the key features of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA):

- Dispensing remuneration increased and indexed to underpin the dispensing of more than 200 million subsidised prescriptions each year.
- Increased investment in regional, rural and remote areas through an increase in the Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance.
- New funding to enhance the Closing the Gap PBS Co-payment measure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- Expanding patient access to Dose Administration Aids, doubling the base cap for pharmacies providing the service and providing uncapped access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Maintaining the investment in medication management programs to support older Australians.
- Recognising improved health outcomes for Australians if the regulations around pharmacists administering vaccines are harmonised across Australia.

Professional programs set for review

PHARMACY professional programs funded under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement are set to undergo a six-month review, with potential changes to be implemented over the course of the 7CPA.

With the new agreement coming into effect from 01 Jul, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Dr Chris Freeman, told **Pharmacy Daily**, "there is still some work to do in terms of looking at new and adapted programs".

"So for the first 12 months we'll have continuation of many of the critical elements of programs from the 6CPA, and

over the course of the next six months undertake significant evaluation, review and potential redesign of programs in years two to five of the agreement," he said.

"[This will] take into consideration major health policy changes [from the Royal Commission into Aged Care and the Inquiry into Mental Health] that are on the horizon."

Freeman noted that funding for professional programs under the 7CPA has been set at \$1.2 billion, delivering an additional \$100 million on top of forecast expenditure on programs under the 6CPA.

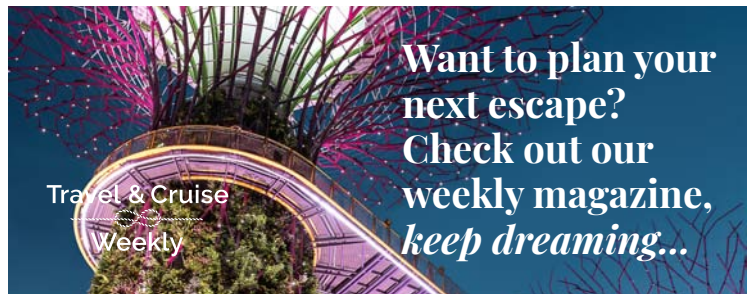
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Plan ownership exit early: Sirianni

PHARMACY owners considering selling up should think carefully before listing their businesses for sale, Medici Capital Managing Director, Frank Sirianni, believes.

Delivering the latest *Sirianni Market Update* earlier this week, Sirianni noted former owners often look to buy back in having taken some time away from the profession.

He recommended owners should consider developing a succession plan to ensure a "staged exit", rather than walking away from a business they have an emotional attachment to, noting many regret selling up too soon, and look to buy back in.

"If you feel reluctant to sell, if you feel that it's difficult to go, but you can't cope with the workload as it is, then a succession plan may be a good way to go," he said.

"[It] gives you the opportunity to plan your exit, to have some specific deadlines, which might be varied, but the reality is you might map out a scenario of how you're going to

exit, which might be over a three, five or 10-year period depending on your age and circumstances.

"That can be a very good way to go, and equally, we're finding that there are a lot of pharmacy owners in their 40s and 50s that are starting to think about that sort of strategy as a way of getting balance in their life."

For those looking to sell up, Sirianni stressed the need to be realistic about the value of the business.

"Often pharmacy owners, particularly people who've been involved in the business for a long time will become emotional about the business and its value," he said.

"They have an expectation of a price which is unrealistic, based on the level of debt that they're attached to the pharmacy for personal reasons.

"Often they ignore the fact that their house might be debt free and their holiday house may be debt free, so they see that the



pharmacy should cover all the debt that they had in their life by the single sale price."

Speaking during the same update, Attain Business Brokers Director, Natalie Sirianni, told owners looking to either sell up completely or enter a succession plan, that preparation time was critical.

"It's important that you don't leave that decision till the last minute," she said.

COVID-19 med

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) has received an application for a conditional marketing authorisation for the antiviral medicine remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19.

A formal evaluation is now under way, with the EMA assessing the benefits and risks of the medication under a reduced timeline.

"An opinion could be issued within weeks, depending on the robustness of the data submitted and whether further information is required to support the evaluation," according to an EMA update.

Remdesivir is administered as an infusion into a vein, and is being developed by Gilead Sciences Ireland.

The fast-track investigation aims to promptly identify and any address potential safety concerns with the medicine.

Unlicensed meds seller assets seized

A BRITISH man convicted of money laundering and the manufacture and sale of unlicensed medicines is facing the confiscation of his private aircraft, boat, Rolls Royce, Aston Martin and bank accounts in the UK and Guernsey.

A hearing at Southwark Crown Court last week found that David Noakes should have his assets seized, as the final stage in a complex four-year investigation by the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

The £1,349,400 (A\$2.5m) confiscation order will see the

assets sold and money paid to the Home Office for distribution under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Noakes is the owner of Guernsey-based Immuno Biotech, and served a 15 month prison sentence from Nov 2018 after pleading guilty to four charges relating to the manufacture, sale and supply of Globulin component Macrophage Activating Factor (GcMAF) which was advertised between 2011 and 2015 as a "miracle cure" for a range of conditions including HIV, cancer and autism.

He also pleaded guilty to one count of money laundering.

Pacific Pharmacists inform the public

AN "INFORMATION gap" for Pacific populations about accessing medicines and pharmacy services is being addressed through a new NZ initiative undertaken by the Pacific Pharmacists' Association.

Auckland-based pharmacist, Diana Phone, came up with the idea after discussing with colleagues some of the challenges being faced during the lockdown period.

Information for Pacific people and the public in general about pharmacy services, medicines and COVID-19 is now available in a downloadable format from

the NZ government's Health Navigator website, translated into nine Pacific languages.

"We wanted to make the information easy to understand, not full of medical jargon," Phone said in an article published by the Pharmaceutical Society of NZ.

"COVID is going to have a long impact on the life of many people - especially people with long term conditions.

"Some are not seeking health services when they should be, and some are not able to pay for their medicines," she said.

The information is online at healthnavigator.org.nz.

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Dispensary Corner

ENDANGERED pangolins will no longer be recommended remedies in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), according to an update to the Chinese Pharmacopoeia this week.

Last Fri China upgraded all species of the scaly creatures (pictured) from "second class" to "first class" protected animals, due to over-hunting and habitat destruction.

Officials have consequently removed the unusual anteaters from the official listing of TCM.

Pangolins are believed to be one of the world's most endangered and illegally trafficked mammal species, according to the *Global Times*.

Hunting in the wild was banned in 2007 by China, while commercial imports of pangolins and pangolin products ceased in 2018.

However, lax enforcement and a strong belief in the power of pangolin scales to promote blood circulation have led to ongoing demand.

Pangolin meat is considered a delicacy, and the creatures have also been postulated as the "missing link" for the transmission of the COVID-19 virus from bats to humans - although formal scientific evidence of the connection has not been forthcoming.



Missed doses cause death

UNCONTROLLED seizures suffered by a woman in a Vic aged care facility due to shortages of medication led to her death, according to a report from the State Coroner this week.

The patient, who had Alzheimer's disease and Down syndrome, had been prescribed 150mg twice daily of phenytoin suspension, but in Oct 2018 the medication began to run out at Homestead Lakes Residential Aged Care Facility in Geelong.

A 500ml bottle was requested from the local pharmacy, which advised that it was unavailable from its supplier for a week.

In the meantime the pharmacy attempted to contact the drug company to see whether tablets could be crushed for administration to the patient instead.

The following day a staff member from the aged care facility faxed the patient's GP practice warning that the pharmacy was unable to source the drug and asking the doctor to note any suitable alternative on the patient's electronic medication chart.

The Coroner noted that the fax did not indicate that the matter was urgent, meaning normal processes to escalate the issue were not

followed.

It took a further two days before the GP attended the facility to provide a script for chewable phenytoin, but the patient had already missed two doses and no "loading dose" was prescribed.

The doctor noted that it was difficult to access the medication chart, because it could not be reviewed without the assistance of staff at the facility.

The following morning the patient was transported to hospital where she suffered a seizure leading to aspiration, respiratory distress and ultimately pneumonia which caused her demise a week later.

Coroner, Jacqui Hawkins, concluded that the sudden cessation of the medication increased the risk of seizures, in turn leading to a higher risk of aspiration pneumonia.

She recommended that the medicine management policy at the aged care centre be updated with advice on how to manage non/supply of medications from the pharmacy and the importance of communicating with the prescribing doctor about missed doses of essential medication.

See coronerscourt.vic.gov.au.

AHPRA podcast

THE latest episode of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) *Taking Care* podcast features Professor Keiran Walshe discussing the purpose of regulating health professionals, and what kinds of problems this regulation hopes to fix.

The fortnightly podcast can be heard on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or at ahpra.gov.au.

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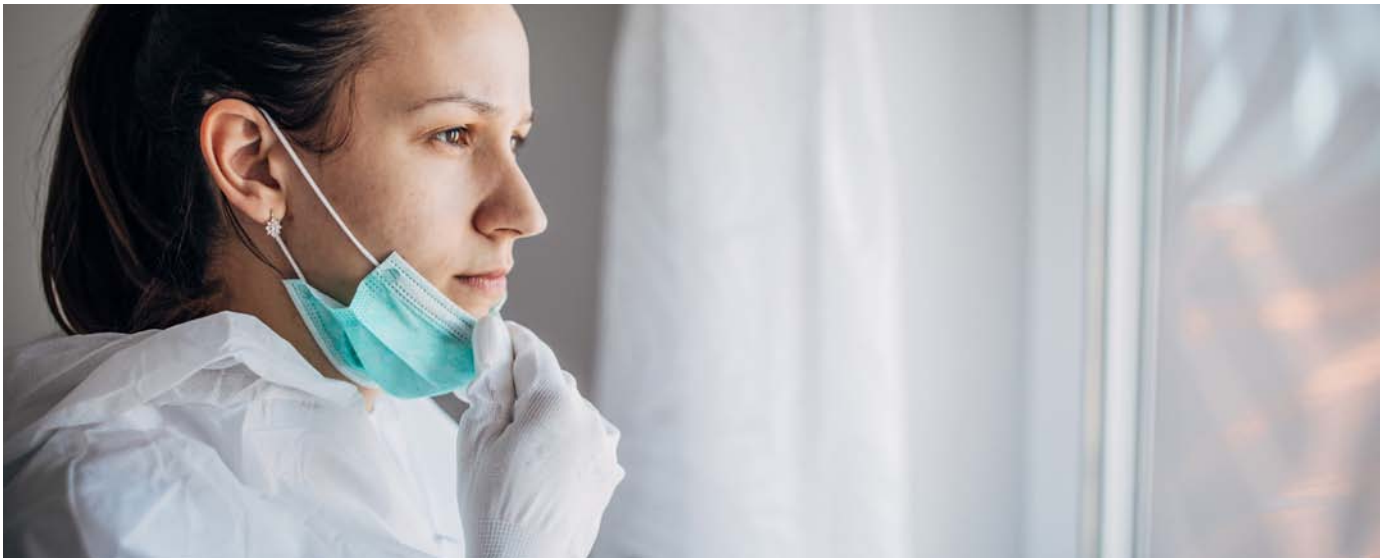
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