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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today has four pages of pharmacy news, plus a full page from **Sigma Connect**.

## Wizard magic for WA businesses

**WESTERN** Australia pharmacy group, Wizard Pharmacy, is showing its support for small businesses across the state that have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, with a donation of hand sanitiser, as they reopen.

The group has also sent supplies of the much-sought-after hand cleaner to schools and day-care centres, which stayed open to look after the children of frontline health workers throughout the pandemic.

Wizard Chief Operating Officer, Sally Parker, said the donations were "an opportunity to give back and thank the community for their support" of pharmacists through the global healthcare crisis.

# Guild lauds certainty secured in 7CPA

**SECURING** a deal that delivers certainty for the community pharmacy sector is being hailed as one of the successes of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA).

Under the new five-year contract between the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Federal Government, a total of \$18.3 billion in Commonwealth funding will be available for the sector - down from the \$18.9 billion originally allocated to the profession under the 6CPA, which is expected to see a \$2.1 billion underspend (*PD* 11 Jun).

Guild National President, George Tambassis, described the deal - the second to be signed under his presidency - as a "fair and reasonable one", which delivers certainty for the pharmacy owners and value for taxpayers and patients.

"There are no huge increases, but then again why would the Government give us massive increases in this particular environment?" he said.

"It's the certainty that is the biggest green tick for me.

"There's no Remuneration Regulation Review - that was a real serious issue last time,



going through all the dramas of negotiating an agreement then a couple of years in we basically had a year of reviews.

"There's a thing called a Remuneration Adjustment Mechanism, a RAM, it's basically a guarantee [this time].

"So the Government has decided to guarantee our funds this time around... so we've tightened the remuneration and the bandwidth of what we can get paid, and what has to be paid back if the volumes get too high... so there are a lot of positives in there."

However, Tambassis noted that while he believed the 7CPA was

a good deal for pharmacy in the current economic climate he said it was "not perfect".

"The \$1 optional discount, which we oppose, is still there, yet not detailed in the agreement," he said in a video message to members released on Fri.

**MEANWHILE**, the final version of the 7CPA, which includes details of planned expenditure for the first 12 months of the deal, has yet to be released by the Department of Health.

Guild sources had expected that the document would have been released on Fri, but it is now likely to be published later this week.

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## Home delivery not funded under 7CPA

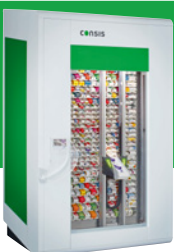
**FUNDING** to support home medicines delivery services beyond the COVID-19 crisis, will not feature in the breakdown of spending under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA).

Although the full details of the agreement have yet to be released by the Department of Health, a spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia told

*Pharmacy Daily* that no provision for ongoing support for the service had been included.

"The current delivery support is part of the Government's COVID response, not part of the agreement," the spokesperson said.

The Federal Government had allocated \$25 million under its \$2.4 billion COVID health package to support home deliveries.



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## COVID killed off 60-day dispensing

**PLANS** to introduce “60-day dispensing” are “gone”, as a result of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the medicines supply chain, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, believes.

Outlining top-line details of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA), during a media conference on Fri, Tambassis, the controversial issue, which was recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) in Aug 2018, was “gone”, and not included in the deal. “COVID-19 played a critical role there,” he said.

“We have to be fair, it was panic stations in early Mar, it was obvious that if anyone provided or dispensed more than 30-days’

[supply of prescription medicines] we’d have a serious problem in this country.

“Other countries that are on more than 30-days’ supply like New Zealand, Canada and some European countries, they all went back to 30 days, because the supply chain is global.

“I can’t see that medicines supply chain improving anytime soon, so [while] it may have been a great idea two years ago, when PBAC recommended it, we’re living in a different world now.

“I think the Government realises that and acknowledges that, that’s why it’s not in the agreement - it’s got nothing to do with the Guild.”

However, in a video distributed to Guild members on Fri, announcing that the long-awaited 7CPA had been signed, Tambassis was less



emphatic that 60-day dispensing will not reemerge in the future.

“[It] is not in the agreement, and we hope it is permanently off the table,” he said.

A Guild spokesperson told **Pharmacy Daily**, “we oppose it and do not believe it should be revisited”.

## Maintaining muscle function

**GUILD** Learning and Development has developed a new CPD-accredited training module to educate pharmacists about maintaining muscle health to boost movement longevity.

The course, titled *The muscle health continuum: preventing muscle mass loss for movement longevity*, highlights the importance of maintaining lifelong muscle health, preventing progressive muscle decline, and managing muscular decline as it occurs.

The activity is accredited for one hour of Group 1 CPD, which can be converted to one hour of Group 2 CPD on completion of assessment.

**CLICK HERE** for more.

## Hunt a ‘rockstar health minister’: Guild

**FEDERAL** Health Minister, Greg Hunt, is being heralded as “the rockstar of health ministers worldwide”, for his efforts in securing the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA).

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, praised Hunt’s commitment to ensuring a deal was reached before the expiry of the 6CPA on 30 Jun, during the COVID-19 health crisis.

“Credit where credit is due, Greg did a fantastic job to get it over the line,” he said.

“He’s done a fantastic job with the COVID pandemic... we were more than impressed that he at least had some bandwidth to look at the CPA, because there was a time when we were a little bit concerned that the 7CPA



obviously took second-place to the COVID-19 pandemic we’re all dealing with.

“But he still gave it due process, he still gave it some TLC to get it over the line.”

Tambassis also praised the Guild’s negotiation team, led by National Vice President, Trent Twomey, and the team from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, who co-signed the deal for the first time.

## SHPA calls for seat in CPA negotiations

**HOSPITAL** pharmacists believe they should have a seat at the table in future Community Pharmacy Agreement (CPA) negotiations.

Welcoming the signing of the \$18.3 billion 7CPA, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia CEO, Kristin Michaels, said hospital pharmacists should be included in discussions relating to remuneration for the delivery of medicines subsidised under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

“We welcome risk sharing arrangements and structural reforms to dispensing remuneration to deliver funding certainty that is resilient to our changing PBS landscape, while noting Australia’s hospitals – custodians of over 20% of PBS

expenditure – should be part of these important considerations,” she said.

Michaels described the allocation of \$1.2 billion in funding for professional services - \$100 million more than has been spent on programs in the 6CPA - as “an important step” for supporting the measures and clinical services needed to move the dial on medicines safety.

“We look forward to reorienting how Australia’s hospitals can participate in the HMR program given recent rule changes,” she said.

“Publicly available data indicates approximately 30% of aged care residents receive an RMMR each year, so we would also support the necessary new funding commitments to lift this coverage.

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## Pharmacy's racism problem

**RACISM** is a live issue in pharmacy, with practitioners and patients guilty of discrimination, a British pharmacist reports.

Writing in *Pharmacy In Practice*, a British website, a white pharmacist of South African heritage, called out the issue in an anonymous blog post.

"Racism is a huge problem in pharmacy," he said.

"It is everywhere you look.

"In my experience, the problem is not most acute between colleagues but generally between patients and staff.

"The saddest aspect is that this behaviour often goes unchallenged and is seen by many as acceptable."

**CLICK HERE** to read more.

## 7CPA NIP clause a 'significant signal'

**MOVES** to push State and Territory Governments to open access to National Immunisation Program (NIP) stock to pharmacists are set to be bolstered by a clause in the freshly inked Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA).

Under the clause, the Federal Government has voiced its support for equitable access to the NIP through the community pharmacy network.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, said the securing the Government's support on the issued was "one of the easiest" parts of the year-long negotiations for the 7CPA.

"They want uniform access and administration of vaccines across the States and Territories," he said.

"We're hoping it will make things happen a bit faster through the National Cabinet Health



Committee."

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, welcomed the inclusion of the clause as a "step forward".

"It's a significant signal around the ability for pharmacists to adopt administering vaccines included in the NIP as appropriate," he said.

"One of the things that the agreement tries to achieve is

to ensure equitable access to medicines for all Australians, and that includes vaccines," he said.

"We've seen inequity in the system in the past, when pharmacists in some states [have had access], but not across the nation.

"This agreement takes that step to try and harmonise access to patients to immunisations under the NIP."

## Teenage bandits avoid jail over robbery

A **PAIR** of knife-wielding teens who "inadvertently nicked" a female pharmacy employee during a robbery last Aug have been sentenced to 18 and 24 months youth detention.

The 19-year-olds, Elias Kahsay and Sidrak Dinkneh, pleaded guilty to charges of armed robbery a 24-hour pharmacy in Ascot Vale, in Melbourne's inner north-west, on 15 Aug (*PD* 19 Aug 2019).

The two men entered the store shortly after 11pm and demanded

benzodiazepines and opioid medications, while a terrified staff member handed over \$400 from the till.

During the five-minute-long raid Dinkneh accidentally cut a 51-year-old employee, before saying, "Oh sorry, I didn't mean to, I don't want to hurt anybody".

Dinkneh was arrested 30 minutes after the robbery, and has been sentenced to 24 months in youth detention, while Kahsay handed himself to police four days later and will serve 18 months.

## Tassie thieves raid Hobart pharmacy

**TASMANIAN** Police are hunting for two masked men who raided the North Hobart Pharmacy on Sat afternoon.

The duo entered the pharmacy through the rear of the store at approximately 2.05pm, with one man telling staff they did not want to hurt anyone.

The other thief went behind the service counter and piled a quantity of prescription medication into a blue cooler bag, before fleeing the scene on foot.

Acting Inspector, Phil Curtis,

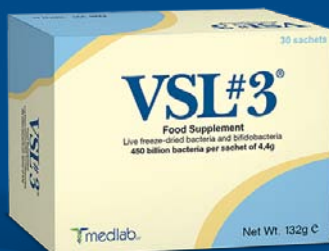
said a number of witnesses have assisted with the investigation, noting the two thieves were wearing black plastic masks.

"Whilst no one was harmed during this incident and there was no indication the men were armed it would have been very intimidating for staff," he said.

"Whilst the items taken were prescription medication, there is always a risk for anyone taking such medication, without that medication being properly subscribed."

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## Dispensary Corner

**MICHAEL** Flor, a 70-year-old resident from the US city of Seattle who is infamous for being the longest-hospitalised COVID-19 patient, almost needed to be re-admitted for a heart attack after receiving a US\$1.1 million hospital bill for his coronavirus treatment.

Flor spent 62 days at Seattle's Swedish Medical Centre in Issaquah, and was unconscious for much of the time.

A 181-page itemised hospital bill includes US\$9,736 per day - or a total of US\$408,912 - for his sealed private room in the intensive care unit, which was only accessible by hospital staff in full protective gear.

The patient spent 29 days on a mechanical ventilator, charged at US\$2,835 per day making a total of US\$82,215.

He was also charged about US\$250,000 for drugs administered during the treatment, while there was almost US\$100,000 in costs related to two days when he suffered multiple organ failure and was extremely close to death - at which time a nurse held a phone to his ear so he could say goodbye to his family.

The charges don't include a further two weeks of recovery in a rehabilitation facility.

Insurance will cover much of the bill, and the US government is also likely to pay the cost of any shortfall because of special coronavirus funding.

However, in the early stages of the illness his wife says he told her "you gotta get me out of here, we can't afford this".

## APC revamps CAOP exam

**THE** Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has announced significant changes to the Competency Assessment for Overseas Pharmacists (CAOP) examination, as part of a continuous improvement program to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

To be implemented from next month, the examination has been cut from three hours to two, with the removal of a short answer question and a total of 70 multiple choice questions overall.

Exams are delivered using the Pearson VUE computerised platform, which randomises the order of the questions.

The CAOP exam is a restricted open-book exam, allowing candidates to bring a maximum of three prescribed references into the exam room including the Australian Medicines Handbook, the Australian Pharmaceutical Formulary and the British National Formulary.

Marking criteria has also changed, with an overall pass mark now all that is required to satisfy the requirements, rather than the

previous criteria requiring several mandatory sub-scores.

The CAOP exam assesses whether eligible candidates have the prerequisite knowledge, skills and ability to apply that knowledge for safe and effective professional practice within Australia.

It does not include questions on the legislative or regulatory framework for pharmacy practice in Australia, but rather gives candidates the opportunity to "demonstrate their competency to practise in a safe and effective manner through the analysis and evaluation of medicine related problems".

Currently the fee charged for the CAOP exam is \$1,845 per attempt, and upon satisfactory completion pharmacists are also required to complete the Pharmacy Board of Australia's registration requirements in order to be eligible for limited registration.

Only two attempts are permitted, with a practice examination in the revised format as well as other guidance documents available at [pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://pharmacycouncil.org.au).

## FIP honours German pharmacist

**THE** International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has named Martin Schulz as the latest recipient of the Andre Bedat Award, which is the organisation's highest honour for pharmaceutical practice.

Schulz has had an extensive career, including roles as head of the Federal Union of German Associations of Pharmacists Centre for Drug Information and Pharmacy Practice.

He has also worked as an adjunct professor at the Free

University of Berlin and as Chairman of the Drug Commission of German Pharmacists.

Schulz co-founded the Pharmaceutical Care Network Europe, with FIP saying his leadership had significantly changed the way the profession had moved to patient care.

The Andre Bedat Award is presented every two years, with the most recent previous recipient being Australia's Professor Lloyd Sansom (PD 05 Sep 2018).



## Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Rachelle Frain, General Manager, myPak Solutions.**



### DAA workflow and your team

**CONSIDERING** recent events and the strain placed on our teams from increased demand, it is a good time to review processes and resources in the day-to-day management of our operations.

DAA's are an integral part of staying connected with patients/customers, and so we should ensure that our workflows in this area are optimal.

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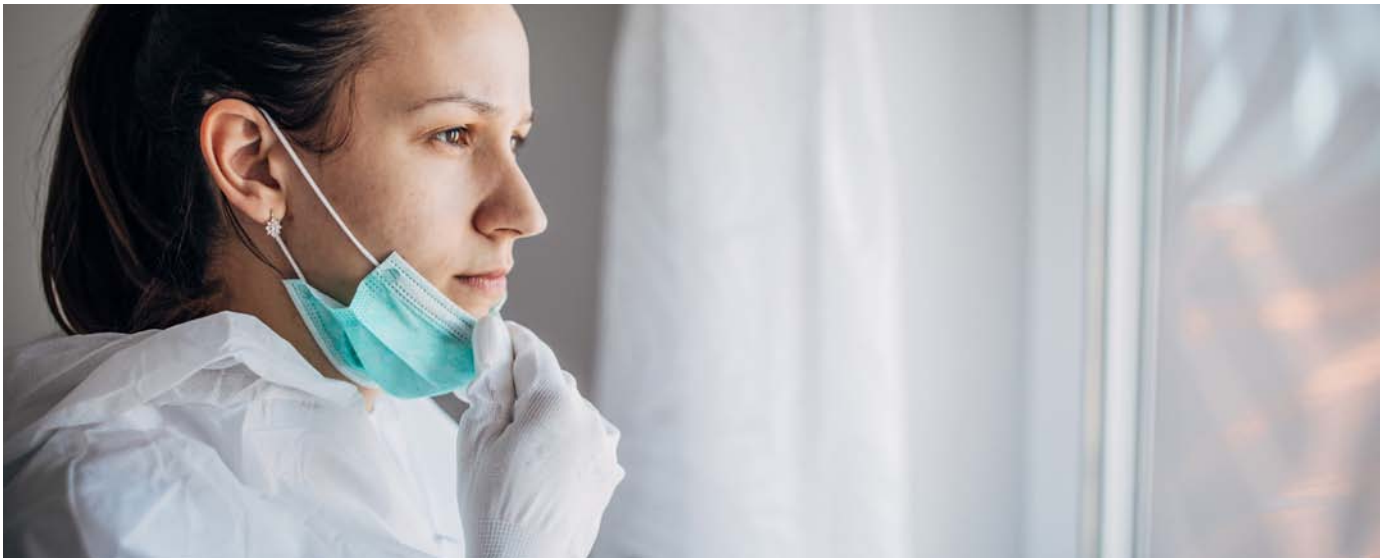
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