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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus full pages from **Sigma Connect**.

FDA revokes EUA for chloroquine

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has revoked the emergency use authorisation (EUA) that allowed supplies of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine donated to the Strategic National Stockpile for the treatment of patients with COVID-19, when a clinical trial is unavailable.

The FDA said the EUA had been pulled as the potential benefits of the treatments no longer outweigh the known and potential risks for the authorised use.

Wholesalers welcome \$92m boost

PHARMACEUTICAL wholesalers are set to benefit from a \$92 million increase in funding through the Community Service Obligation (CSO) over the next five years.

Under changes to the CSO, which were signed off on by Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, and Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, as part of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) last week, also includes the introduction of a "floor price" to support medicines supply through the wholesaler network.

Welcoming the reforms, National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA) Chair, Mark Hooper, said the measure would support wholesalers in ensuring timely and equitable access to medicines during the lifetime of the 7CPA.

"After a decade of declining funding due to the ongoing impact of PBS reform, it has never been



more important to invest in the logistics network that is relied upon to deliver medicines to all parts of the country," he said. "We are very proud of our role in the health system, particularly in recent months as we have overcome the dual challenges of the New Year bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions which placed extraordinary and sustained pressure on our systems."

"Implicit in this new agreement is recognition of the capability and value that the wholesalers provide in supporting government, Australia's PBS, medicine manufacturers and community pharmacy.

"New government funding will allow investment with confidence in things such as distribution centre infrastructure, automation, technology solutions and jobs."

Mandatory vax reporting recommended

STATE and Territory legislation should be amended to require pharmacists to report vaccines to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR), the authors of a new report into pharmacist vaccination reporting, believe.

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance's Review of pharmacist vaccination reporting to AIR, found significant under-reporting to the register.

Interviews with stakeholders suggested "more vaccines were reported to have been administered in 2019 by three banner groups combined than we recorded in AIR for all pharmacy

providers in that year".

"In addition, pharmacy peak bodies have reported that over one million influenza vaccinations were administered in pharmacies in 2018 and over two million in 2019 – 10 and four times more than those reported to AIR, respectively," the authors said.

Among the list of five recommendations to improve reporting to AIR, the authors said, "legislation mandating reporting of pharmacist vaccinations to AIR should be encouraged across all jurisdictions", while data on the number of vaccines supplied to pharmacy should also be recorded in the AIR.

RACGP disappointed by 7CPA omission

EXCLUDING 60-day dispensing from the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) is "disappointing", Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) President, Dr Harry Nespolon, believes.

Reacting to the headline details that have emerged following the signing of the 7CPA on Thursday night Nespolon, suggested the Federal Government had allowed health policy to be dictated by "foot traffic", rather than the recommendations of the 2017 King Review.

"Last year we call for the double of the dispensing limit to 60 days for many of the most

common medications on which Australian rely," he said.

"We regret that the Government has chosen no to include extended dispensing in the new CPA.

"Patients should not be treated as customers and foot traffic is not the basis of good health policy."

However, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, said the decision to drop 60-day dispensing from the 7CPA reflected the impact the COVID-19 crisis has had on the global medicines supply chain (PD 15 Jun).

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Dispensary Corner

ROBOTS are set to be used in the fight against COVID-19 in Japan, with authorities in the city of Kobe announcing planned deployment of anti-coronavirus automatons.

Announced earlier this month, the initiative is a collaboration between the city and medical robot maker Medicaroid.

Robots (pictured) will conduct tests for COVID-19, with the project not only reducing the risk of infection for medical personnel but also increasing Kobe's testing capacity by a multiple of four or more.

"The use of robots for Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing will be the first of its kind in Japan, and will allow doctors to control the robots remotely to collect saliva samples while communicating with patients via the attached monitor," said an official release from city officials.

Medicaroid President, Yasuhiko Hashimoto said with Japan's expertise in robotics, the testing system "has the potential to benefit the rest of the world".

The automatons will also be capable of delivering meals and taking body temperature readings - let's hope that perhaps one day we might also be able to ask them to clean the car or do the washing up.



Ready willing and able

QUEENSLAND'S State Government is being urged to take advantage of the pharmacy workforce to support a rapid rollout of a COVID-19 vaccine should one become available.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch President, Trent Twomey, said health officials need to prepare a plan now to ensure rapid and equitable access to the vaccine, noting that pharmacists in the State had played a key role in boosting influenza vaccine uptake in recent months.

"Rapidly deploying a COVID-19 vaccination in will require all primary healthcare professionals to join forces and work together to protect vulnerable community members during a time when they are most at risk," he said.

"Ongoing collaboration and coordination between the Queensland Government and health professionals is essential."

"Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, has previously expressed how important it will be for the COVID-19 vaccine to be available to everyone and distributed as quickly as possible, including through local community pharmacies.



"She has acknowledged that community pharmacists are ready and mobilised to vaccinate.

"The Guild asks the Queensland Government to use the strengths of community pharmacists to rapidly and safely deploy vaccines.

"After the largest flu vaccination season ever, community pharmacists stand ready and waiting to continue administering vital vaccines."

Twomey also called for any future COVID-19 vaccine to be subsidised through the National Immunisation Program (NIP), with pharmacists being given access.

"All healthcare professionals should be equally subsidised through the NIP when providing the same service and give all patients the opportunity to choose the most convenient healthcare option for them at any given time," he said.

Profession backs looted pharmacy

MEMBERS of the San Fernando Valley Pharmacists Association are helping a suburban Los Angeles pharmacy get back on its feet after it was looted during recent riots linked to protests against police killings of African Americans in recent weeks.

Located in a strip mall, Elements Pharmacy - Studio City, was targeted by looters who stole between 25 and 30% of the

store's prescription medicines, *Canyon News* reported.

Despite the challenges of getting the pharmacy back on track, owner, Sherri Cherman, said she was doing what she can for patients.

"We are set up with twice a day delivery from our wholesaler, so in the morning whatever we realised wasn't here we were able to get by the afternoon," she said.

Guild Update

7CPA update

The Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement provides certainty and stability for Australia's 5,800 community pharmacies, and ensures the delivery of world class pharmacy services to Australian patients.

The Pharmacy Guild thanks the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, and the Department of Health for reaching this Agreement in the interests of all Australian patients.

Community Pharmacy Agreements between the Commonwealth and the Pharmacy Guild have been in place since 1991.

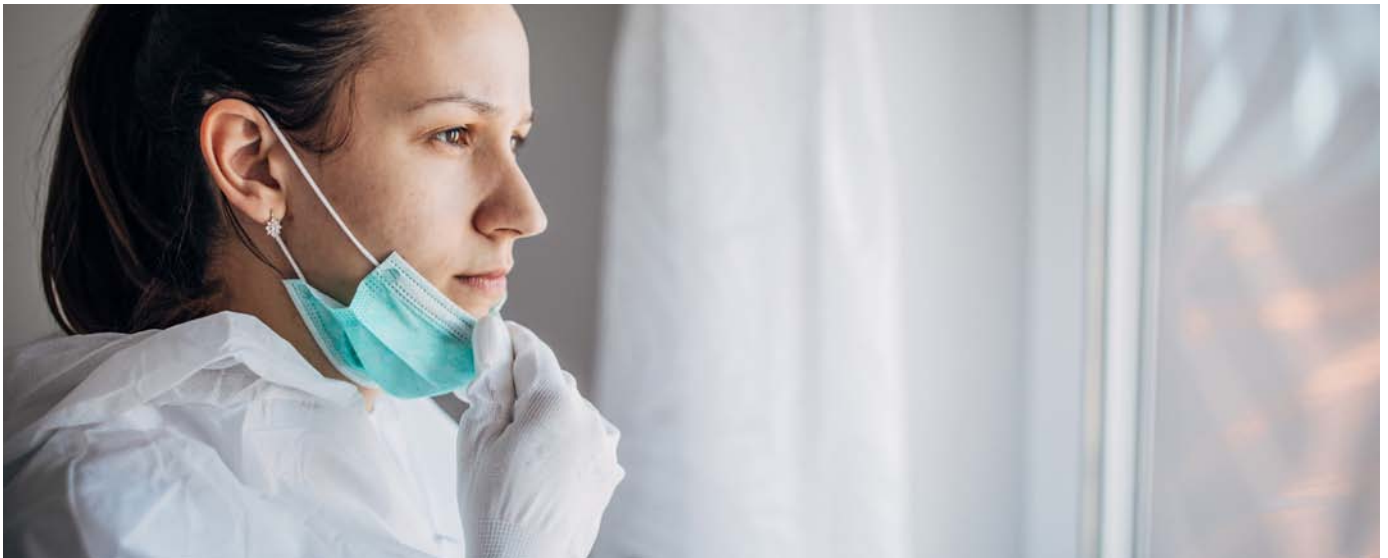
The Agreements provide certainty for the government and for pharmacy that are tasked with the effective supply of PBS medicines on behalf of taxpayers to the maximum benefit of patients.

Medicine safety will be a key focus of the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement with additional investment in medication management services and programs.

The Guild will be conveying more details about the Agreement to Members in the coming days through our communications channels and through a roadshow later this year.

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