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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news, plus a full page from Eagle Shared Services.

Dexamethasone shows promise

INITIAL clinical trial results from the UK show dexamethasone can be "lifesaving for patients who are critically ill with COVID-19", the World Health Organization (WHO) reports.

WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhomom Ghebreyesus, described the findings as a "lifesaving scientific breakthrough".

Dexamethasone has been listed on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines since 1977, and has been used for a range of inflammatory disorders and certain cancers.

WHO will coordinate a meta-analysis to increase overall understanding of the intervention and clinical guidance will be updated to reflect how and when the drug should be used in COVID-19.

Pharmacy owner delivers free flu vax

SOUTH Australian pharmacists, Irfan Hashmi and Sobia Irfan, are taking steps to ease the burden on general practice and hospital health services by offering free influenza vaccines to vulnerable groups.

The move came in response to the COVID-19 crisis, with the 2009 Pharmaceutical Society of Australia SA Pharmacist of the Year working with Multicultural Communities Australia to provide immunisation services to at-risk patients, by removing the barrier of cost.

Hashmi, who owns the TerryWhite Chemmart Cumberland Park pharmacy in Adelaide, and is a director of the Aussie Discount Chemist group, which operates stores across regional parts of the state, said the campaign had been an "instant success".

"The program was initiated with our pharmacy in Adelaide, but due to the overwhelming response we expanded it to reach country towns like Port Pirie and communities in Whyalla and Port Augusta through our pharmacy in Quorn, and the Mildura region through our pharmacy in Merbein," he said.

"We have already vaccinated around 300 individuals free of cost, including those who do not have



access to Medicare benefits like international students... parents of Permanent Residency visa holders and immigrants.

"This year due to the pandemic crisis and increased need for immunisation, we have had a huge influx of customers for vaccines.

"I have travelled back and forth on weekends to do special flu clinics in country towns Ororoo and Coober Pedy.

"I also organised an on-site flu clinic for Coober Pedy Council members, and staff of Quorn's council were welcomed at the Quorn pharmacy.

"We were also one of the pharmacies offering vaccination

through the Pharmacy Guild Corporate program [and] we have had fully booked Flu Clinics in all our pharmacies.

"But, keeping in mind that many people have been affected financially as well due to COVID-19, we decided to step up and offer free vaccines because a healthier community will lessen the burden on our hospitals and general practitioners by providing them protection against, flu symptoms/Influenza."

Hashmi said the group had also arranged free flu clinics at the Pooraka Imam Ali Mosque, the Marion Mosque and a temple in Allenby Garden in recent weeks.

APC Chair re-elected with new Deputy

AUSTRALIAN Pharmacy Council Chair, Associate Professor Sue Kirsa, has been re-elected for a further two-year term following the Jun Board meeting.

University of Queensland School of Pharmacy Head, Professor Sarah Roberts-Thomson has been appointed as Deputy Chair, replacing Professor Iqbal Ramzan, who has held the post for two and half years.



Roberts-Thomson has been an APC Board Director since 2018 and is a member of the council's Examination Committee.



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PotY 2021 to celebrate profession

STORIES from the coalface of pharmacies that have gone above and beyond will ensure the efforts made by pharmacy teams will be recognised in the 2021 Pharmacy of the Year (PotY) Awards.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced a revised format that will abandon the nomination process and instead focus on reports of pharmacies that have stood out during the bushfire and COVID-19 crises, managing medicines shortages, adjusting store configurations to adapt to social distancing requirements and catering for the increased demand for influenza vaccinations.

Guild National President, George Tambassis, said the new model would be more inclusive of the whole profession.

“This format will allow 2021 to

be seen as a year of reflection and celebration of all community pharmacies, and their contribution to the health of Australians,” he said.

“It will highlight the responses to the bushfires, COVID-19, their adaptations, transformations and the integral role they have played in their communities and for their patients.”

Jonathan Biddle, General Manager of awards sponsor Care Pharmaceuticals, said the new approach would provide an opportunity to reflect on the efforts that were made by pharmacists and pharmacy staff during what has been a difficult year.

“This year will be long remembered as perhaps the most challenging in the profession’s history, but throughout it,



community pharmacies have continued to operate and work to meet the needs of their patients,” he said.

“This community spirit and commitment will be reflected in the new format and I look forward to seeing some of the wonderful achievements of the often-unsung heroes in pharmacy being recognised and highlighted.”

Canada change

THE government of the Canadian province of Alberta has extended the availability of prescription drug repeats to a 100-day supply, as part of its evolving response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initially when coronavirus hit, officials imposed a 30-day limit on refills to help address potential shortages.

However supply levels are returning to normal, although under the new rules pharmacists still have discretion to only dispense a 30-day supply when necessary, if there is a supply chain issue with that specific item.

The Albertan health minister said the change would support pharmacists in reducing the volume of scripts to fill.

UK pharmacy complaints soar

BRITAIN’S General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) has confirmed a 40% increase in “Fitness to Practice” concerns in Apr, according to the agenda for a forthcoming meeting of the regulator.

Many of the concerns related to pricing of medicines, hand gel and facemasks, and “some pointed to possible anti-competitive practice”.

The agenda, which also notes discussions held by teleconference in May and early Jun, said a consistent approach to pandemic-related concerns

was being developed, including by dialogue with Britain’s Competition and Markets Authority.

Several pharmacies had also been ordered to remove COVID-19 home testing kits for sale, the agenda added.

Other discussions related to pre-registration training and assessment as well as provisional registration, including with schools of pharmacy and the Australian Pharmacy Council in relation to the provision of the pre-registration examination online.

Organised looters target pharmacies

PHARMACISTS in parts of Los Angeles “impacted” by recent protests over police treatment of African Americans are being advised to board up their stores to limit damage and “prevent drug losses”.

Los Angeles Police Chief, Michel Moore, told the *LA Times* that US Federal authorities had said organised groups not linked to the Black Lives Matter movement have used peaceful protests as an opportunity to conduct smash-and-grab raids on pharmacists.

To date more than 170 pharmacists in the city have been

impacted by looting, with thieves taking stocks of prescription medications to resell.

The California State Board of Pharmacy issued a statement advising that it must be notified of a pharmacy has been damaged, looted or vandalised during the unrest.

“All crimes should be reported to local law enforcement, especially theft of controlled substances,” the Board said.

“The DEA requires pharmacies to report all theft and significant losses of controlled substances within one business day.”



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Dispensary Corner

AUSTRIAN police officers have fined a man €500 (A\$820) because he broke wind loudly during an identity check.

The official charge of "massive flatulence" was imposed because of the deliberate nature of the fart, which allegedly involved lifting his backside from the bench where he was sitting at the time.

The man has complained on social media about the "disproportionate and unjustified" penalty, with the Viennese police department defending their actions.

"Of course, nobody is put on the spot if one slips out by accident," the agency posted on Twitter, saying when approached the man had been "provocative and uncooperative".

"He then slightly raised himself from the bench, looked at the officers, and patently, in a completely deliberate way, emitted a massive flatulence in their immediate proximity."

A GYMNASIUM operator in Los Angeles is set to reopen in a COVID-safe way after setting up individual exercise pods.

Shower curtains and pipes have been used to create the custom-made dividers at Inspire South Bay Fitness in Redondo Beach (pictured), with each pod also featuring its own sanitised weights and other items.



Aged Care RC key to DAA funding

RECOMMENDATIONS from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety could be crucial to securing funding for the packing of dose administration aids (DAAs) for residential patients.

Under the yet to be released Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) funding has been provided to double the current on DAAs for community-dwelling patients, while the new deal allows for uncapped access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples.

However, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, noted that the funding does not stretch to patients in residential aged care facilities.

"DAAs are only for community patients," he said.

"The first complaint we got when



DAA funding came through was 'how come there's no funding for aged care facilities?'

"Which I hear loud and clear.

"There just wasn't enough money, to fund those patients, and that's

not fair.

"So maybe that's something that will come out of the Aged Care Royal Commission, and we can fund that packing for those patients through another source."

NEW PRODUCTS

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Are you counselling your Asthmatic customers?

Asthma Australia recommends that everyone who is using a puffer should be using a spacer with their medication. Are your customers using a spacer with their puffer at home or on the go?

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