

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

NZ funding deal

THE New Zealand Government has announced NZ\$18 million in funding for community pharmacies to assist them in providing services including virtual triage and counselling through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The payments will be made available to support a "critical network" of 365 pharmacies across the country, recognising that those serving small communities had come under particular pressure due to coronavirus.

The pharmacy funding is part of the NZ\$15.9 billion COVID-19 Recovery and Response Fund announced as part of the NZ Budget.

NZ Health Minister David Clark said the money would help ensure the affected pharmacies could continue their normal operations, as well as to increase access to health services by the public.

CPCC to deliver 7CPA transparency

A NEW Community Pharmacy Consultation Committee (CPCC) which will be established under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) aims to "increase transparency over the management" of the five-year deal.

The committee, which will feature up to three appointees nominated by both the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Department of Health, and will meet up to two times a year "unless the Department and the Guild agree that one or more additional needs are required".

Details of the new committee and a Pharmacy Stakeholder Consultation Committee (PSCC), which will include representatives of 7CPA co-signatory, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) are included in the agreement, which was officially published last night - a week after the deal was signed.

"The CPCC is to be the primary consultation mechanism to support the achievement of the Commonwealth and the Guild's objectives under this agreement," the 7CPA says.

"The CPCC is not a decision making body, but the CPCC may



provide advice or options to the signatories of the 7CPA, and to the representative of the Australia Government for the purposes of the 7CPA.

"The CPCC does not supplant or limit the Department's obligations under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* to ensure the proper use of public resources."

The CPCC will be responsible for formulating options for key performance measures, respond to issues directly relating to services and programs under the 7CPA where performance outcomes are not being achieved, and to support adherence to the 7CPA and relevant legislative obligations.

Under the 7CPA the PSCC has

been designed to "facilitate broad engagement between parties interested in the operation and development of the elements of the pharmacy sector funded by the Commonwealth, including Community Pharmacy Programs.

The PSCC will feature up to three appointees each nominated by the Guild, PSA and the Department, while representatives of other stakeholders such as the Consumers' Health Forum, may be invited if appropriate.

Meetings where the PSCC is considering matters relevant to Indigenous Australians will be chaired by a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, under the terms of the agreement.

No room for complacency on smoking

AUSTRALIA is doing a "great job" in cutting the number of smokers, but "we must not become complacent", Australian Medical Association Vice President, Chris Zappala, warns.

Voicing support for the Federal Government's announcement that it intends to continue the ban on the importation of e-cigarettes containing vaporised nicotine, Zappala said the tobacco

industry's promotion of vaping was an attempt to normalise smoking.

"The continued ban will also prevent non-smokers from unintentionally developing nicotine addiction, which can lead to traditional tobacco use," he said.

"Given the experience in the US, this is a particular concern for young people in Australia."

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Freeman retains PSA Presidency

PHARMACEUTICAL Society of Australia National President, Dr Chris Freeman, will continue in the role until at least 01 July 2021, after securing the support of the organisation's National Board today.

With the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the PSA to postpone branch committee elections scheduled to take place between 14 Apr and 11 May (PD 09 Mar), the terms of State, Territory and National Boards were extended by 12 months (PD 20 Apr), with the National Board re-electing Freeman as President.

The Board also re-elected Victorian Branch member, Michelle Lynch, as one of two Vice Presidents, alongside ACT Branch President, Renae Beardmore.

Freeman, who became the first PSA President to co-sign sections of a Community Pharmacy Agreement, said it was a honour

to be re-elected to the role he was appointed to in Dec 2018, when Dr Shane Jackson stepped down.

"I have been so proud of the way pharmacists have adapted, innovated and cared for their patients and communities during the recent bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic, and it is a privilege to be able to continue in this role," he said.

"While there are challenges facing the profession there are also some great opportunities and I am looking forward to helping our members grasp these opportunities to build their professional careers, while also improving the health of Australians.

"For the first time in 30 years PSA is a signatory in the Community Pharmacy Agreement, our advocacy and policy work will continue as we focus on extending



support for the recommendations in our Pharmacists in 2023 action plan and medicine safety reports.

"I congratulate both Michelle and Renae on their appointments and I am thrilled to be working with two very talented pharmacists and health professionals."

Bond retires

PHARMACY training and education leader, Sue Bond, is being thanked for her "amazing contribution to pharmacy" after 22 years working with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Bond has led Guild Learning and Development (GLD) for the last 12 years, having previously spent a decade as the Victoria Branch Training Manager, Guild National President, George Tambassini noted.

"Sue has made an amazing contribution to community pharmacy nationally," he said.

"Many thousands of pharmacists and staff have benefitted from the training courses and education programs Sue has overseen."

Under Bond GLD provides 100,000 courses a year to pharmacists across Australia.

DDS appoints its first national council

DISCOUNT Drug Stores (DDS) has established a new National Council which comprises 13 of the group's pharmacy franchise partners as well as representatives from the brand's owner Sigma Healthcare.

Patrick Stoll, recently appointed as Head of DDS and Chemist King, said he was "thrilled to partner with a group of members who are passionate about the DDS brand".

"Their knowledge provides us with a local perspective on how we can deliver tailored

healthcare advice to these communities," Stoll said.

The national council is chaired by Queensland-based pharmacy owner, Martin Schulz, who said he believed it will remove barriers and give franchise partners the ability to voice their opinions on what is and isn't working.

"In the long run this will establish stronger frameworks and strategies within DDS and enhance in-pharmacy experiences for customers," Schulz enthused.

Sigma launches new training platform

PHARMACY wholesaler Sigma Pharmaceuticals is launching a new learning and development program to support its Amcal and Guardian Pharmacy brands.

The Sigma Academy aims to provide "a range of tailored pharmacy programs to equip pharmacy teams of the future".

Amcal and Guardian Head, Kurt O'Brien, said courses have been designed to support and provide meaningful professional development opportunities through flexible and interactive methods.

"As businesses at the frontline of community healthcare, we know the development of our people across the entire ecosystem of pharmacy, including pharmacy leaders, pharmacy assistants and retail assistants, are essential to a strong pharmacy future," said Mr O'Brien.

"The Sigma Academy has been developed with people, processes and technology at its core, building a learning and performance-based culture to improve business outcomes."



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Dispensary Corner

WE'RE all aware of the need for social distancing, hand sanitisation and symptom monitoring to battle coronavirus - but Russian President Vladimir Putin has a further layer of security around him to keep him safe from COVID-19.

Anyone visiting him at his country residence in Novo-Ogaryovo must pass through a special "sanitising tunnel" which sprays them with disinfectant on all sides (pictured) before being granted an audience.

The precautionary system also takes the temperature of any occupant and uses facial recognition to track the identity of anyone in the tunnel.

A Kremlin spokesperson also confirmed that anyone wanting to interact with Putin must also undergo a COVID-19 test.



NEW Zealand's oldest dentist has filled his last filling, with the retirement of 88-year-old Terry Lealand marking the end of a dental era.

He's been practising for more than 64 years, but broke his hip last year on a cruise with his wife and now finds it a little tricky to climb the stairs to his first floor surgery.

Lealand's age also puts him at greater risk from COVID-19, so he's hanging up his drill because he's so long in the tooth.

COVID-19 strengthens glass ceiling

WOMEN pursuing careers in pharmaceutical research and academia are facing fresh challenges preventing them from breaking through the glass ceiling, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking during an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar on Wed night, a number of female pharmacists said their research was "on hold" as they attempt to juggle caring for family members and meeting their professional responsibilities.

Turkish Pharmacists' Association sociologist, Ecehan Balta, told delegates that the global pandemic has exacerbated preexisting barriers for women in academic settings.

"The gender inequities have already been preventing women from promotions in academic life, and we now observe that it is increasing," she said.

"We can say that there's a glass ceiling above our heads and whenever we try to climb, we hit it.

"And remote working is not making it easier, because we have much more to do in the household."

Kathmandu University Department of Pharmacy Head,



Dr Rajani Shakya, noted a global decline in publishing by female authors since the COVID-19 crisis started.

"Everyone is affected by the pandemic, but overall it has largely hit females [more than males]," she said.

"In our workplace most of us are competing with men who do far less at home - there are some exceptional cases, but in the majority of households it is the women who find difficulty in finding the time for their professional growth due to domestic work.


"In this pandemic I have read some articles that say the number of publications from male authors is growing faster than the number

by female authors.


"Globally women are not advancing in research as much as men due to COVID-19."

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Department of Pharmaceutics Senior Lecturer, Mariam El Boakye-Gyasi, told the webinar that the combination of pressure to care for family members and the COVID-induced closure of university facilities in Ghana was limiting opportunities for female pharmacists to conduct research. "All our research has come to a halt," she said.

"Even putting together papers for publication is a challenge now [because of domestic pressures]."



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COVID risk survey

THE Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the UK Black Pharmacists' Association have launched a survey to discover if organisations have started to implement risk assessments to support safe working environments for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups who have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.