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AUSTRALIAN OWNED & MADE

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from Keyromar.

APP is still on!

THE Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference & Trade Exhibition (APP) is going ahead as planned next week, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has insisted.

In an e-mail yesterday, the Guild addressed "concerns among the community regarding large gatherings," assuring attendees organisers would do everything to ensure a safe event for sponsors, exhibitors and delegates.

Sigma Healthcare, which this week cancelled its Amcal and Guardian conference leading up to APP (PD 11 Mar), also confirmed its participation in the weekend, as well as the involvement of Mark Hooper as part of the industry panel.

Pharmacy Guild hails COVID package

THE Federal Government has announced it will fast-track the rollout of electronic prescribing across Australia, through the provision of \$5 million in funding under a new comprehensive \$2.4 billion health package aiming to help deal with COVID-19.

The package also includes \$25 million to pay for home medicines services, which will enable patients to have their PBS prescriptions filled online or remotely, and have the medicines home delivered.

The new service will be available for people in home isolation, as well as for vulnerable patient groups, and all pharmacies with e-prescribing capabilities will be eligible to participate.

The wide-ranging package also includes the rollout of new Medicare telehealth items as well as up to 100 dedicated respiratory clinics across the country.

"The clinics will be a one-stop-shop for people who are concerned they may have the virus, to be



tested and isolated from other patients," said PM Scott Morrison.

The Pharmacy Guild, PSA and SHPA have all hailed the package, with Guild National President, George Tambassis, saying "we look forward to seeing the detail of the package and working with the Government in the interests of patient safety and wellbeing".

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) also welcomed the news, with National President Chris

Freeman adding that community pharmacy should be supported in the adoption and implementation of electronic prescribing.

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) CEO Kristin Michaels said \$500 million in funding for hospitals would help them deal with COVID-19, also cautioning that "panic buying" of medicines could contribute to shortages for inpatients who need them the most.



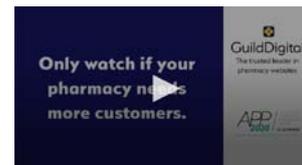
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An extra NIP?

THE time has come to extend the National Immunisation Program (NIP) nationally, believes Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PGA) Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood.

Writing in the Guild's *Forefront* newsletter this week, Greenwood called for the NIP to be extended to all states and territories, with the 2020 flu season expected to continue a worsening trend.

Currently, only Victoria, Western Australia and the ACT can administer vaccines through the program, with the latter two regions only in the pilot stage.

"Never has it been easier to get a vaccination, and if these were available under the NIP across the country then it is a foregone conclusion that community immunity rates would rise sharply," Greenwood said.

"This year the severity of the expected flu season has the added complexity of the coronavirus, or COVID-19, so boosting immunity rates has assumed an even greater importance.

"The more people who have the flu vaccine the better for improving community immunity."

Pharmacy Guild of Australia SA Branch President Nick Panayiaris also recently endorsed a broadening of the NIP (PD 09 Mar).

WA pharmacy honoured

WHEATBELT Health Centre Pharmacy in Western Australia has been named the winner of the Excellence in Community Engagement category in the 2020 Guild Pharmacy of the Year Awards.

Recognised for "engaging with the community on a professional, social, business and health level", the pharmacy will be crowned at the opening plenary session of the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference & Trade Exhibition on the Gold Coast on Thu 19 Mar at 8.30am.

Wheatbelt Health Centre is the winner of one of three categories, with the recipient for Excellence in Professional Innovation to be

named in the coming days, while Capital Chemist Chisholm in the ACT taking out the Excellence in Community Engagement category earlier this week (PD 10 Mar).

Spokesperson for the judging group, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National Councillor and President of the SA Branch of the Guild, Nick Panayiaris, said Wheatbelt Health Centre stood out for its integration within their regional health centre.

Care Pharmaceuticals General Manager, Jonathan Biddle, lauded Wheatbelt Health Centre's approach to the profession, and the team's focus on their role as medical experts, rather than attempting to compete on price.

NPS on asthma

NPS MedicineWise late last month launched the first phase of an asthma educational program.

The initial scheme aims to refresh health professionals on their knowledge about basic principles in diagnosing and managing asthma for children, aged both 1-5 & 6-11, while phase two, commencing later in the year, will focus on adolescents and adults.

Interns approved for flu jabs in NZ

INTERN pharmacists can now administer influenza vaccines in New Zealand, as long as they have completed the country's pharmacist vaccinator course.

The change became effective last week, meaning intern pharmacists can now immunise anyone aged 13 and over, reports NZ trade publication *Pharmacy Today*.

Currently just under half of the 1,000 pharmacies across New Zealand offer vaccinations, and it's hoped that the new rules will increase this as vaccination increasingly becomes seen as a standard part of community pharmacy practice.

The Pharmaceutical Society

of New Zealand has a 2025 goal of having all pharmacies in NZ being funded to offer the full National Immunisation Schedule of vaccines.

It's also believed having more pharmacist vaccinators will lead to greater immunisation rates.

"For high needs patients, it's often more convenient to go to a pharmacy than make an appointment to see a doctor," said NZ Pharmaceutical Society president, Ian McMichael.

The initiative was backed by the country's Immunisation Advisory Centre, which trains pharmacist immunisers, with director Nikki Turner saying it would expand public access to vaccines.

COVID-19 study

A NEW paper released today by the *Medical Journal of Australia* has tracked the "clinical course and laboratory features of the first reported case of COVID-19 in Australia".

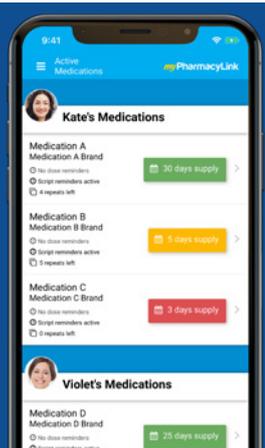
The report from a team at Melbourne Health's Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory, the University of Melbourne and Monash Medical Centre, describes the 19 Jan arrival of a 58-year-old man from Wuhan, China who was subsequently admitted to hospital with symptoms of fever, cough and progressive dyspnea.

The scientists said "the ability to rapidly identify, propagate and share the SARS-CoV-2 isolate globally represents an important step in collaborative scientific efforts in response to this public health emergency" - see the paper at mja.com.au.

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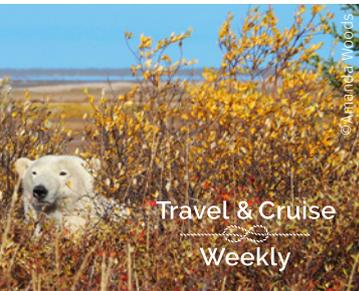


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Dispensary Corner

THE frantic scrounging for face masks in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak has reached new lows in Ireland, with an unscrupulous thief stealing boxes of the protective face wear from St Luke's Hospital in Dublin.

A surge in panic buying of surgical face masks has led to empty shelves across the country, sending wholesale prices soaring by 500%, and evidently, pushing some people to desperate measures.

There is no word yet on whether the thief has been apprehended, but at least we know they clearly weren't wearing a mask at the time of the robbery.



SCIENCE is working on many admirable projects, curing cancer, working on vaccines, but on occasion you have to question if some studies really are time well spent.

A team of biologists from Dartmouth in New Hampshire, who recently concluded that British comedian John Cleese's 'funny walk' is precisely six times sillier than a regular person's walk.

The team found Cleese's knees would bend through 110° degrees, compared to the 20° of a normal person.

We hope they win the Nobel Prize for meaningfulness.

18 month registration ban

THE New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal has cancelled the registration of a pharmacist over irregularities in pharmaceutical benefits scheme (PBS) payments between 2013 and 2016 at pharmacies he owned.

John Moawad has already served a nine month suspended sentence over the offences, which saw him "defraud over \$86,000 from a vital part of the Australian healthcare system" through falsified prescriptions and patient medication records.

"This was not a one-off or limited infraction; it occurred dozens of times over two locations and over an extended period," the Tribunal said in its judgement.

Facts tendered during the hearing confirmed that from 2009 until 2012 Moawad was employed at Roy Young Chemist in Chatswood, ultimately as the General Manager.

The collapse of the pharmacy's owner, Pulse Pharmacy Group, saw Moawad paying the receivers \$243,000 sometime around Nov 2012, without admitting liability.

In Jul 2012 he purchased a 50% share in Town Hall Pharmacy Sydney, and in Dec 2013 Moawad

also took ownership of Harbourside Pharmacy in Darling Harbour.

In May 2015 he also bought a third of another pharmacy, with family members owning the rest.

A PBS audit of Town Hall Pharmacy uncovered irregularities in scripts, in the name of a relative of the pharmacist and two other patients, and in a subsequent interview Moawad admitted having made false claims.

A Pharmacy Council hearing in 2017 determined that a suspension of his registration "may be disproportionate" because it would have forced him to dispose of any ownership interest in pharmacies.

The NSW Health Care Complaints Commission subsequently brought proceedings before the Tribunal, which earlier this week found his evidence was "vague, shifting and at times contradictory".

The judgement found that "at the present time the Tribunal is not convinced that the practitioner can be trusted in professional practice".

Moawad has been given seven months to divest his ownership in the pharmacies, but in the meantime interim conditions also prevent him from practising.



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The Stay 5/Pay 4 deal includes daily breakfast, a complimentary snorkelling excursion, an hour of canapes and drinks daily, wi-fi and return transfers from Nadi.

The adults-only resort can be booked by calling 1300 880 571.

Ride to the top

MOTORCYCLE touring company Nomadic Knights is promoting a 14-day journey to the base of Mount Everest, with US\$500 off for bookings confirmed by the end of Apr.

The fully guided trip departs Kathmandu, Nepal on 12 Sep this year, with participants taking a 2,340km route on classic Royal Enfield Himalayans to iconic destinations including Lhasa in Tibet, with prices including breakfasts, dinners and logistical support - nomadicknights.com.

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