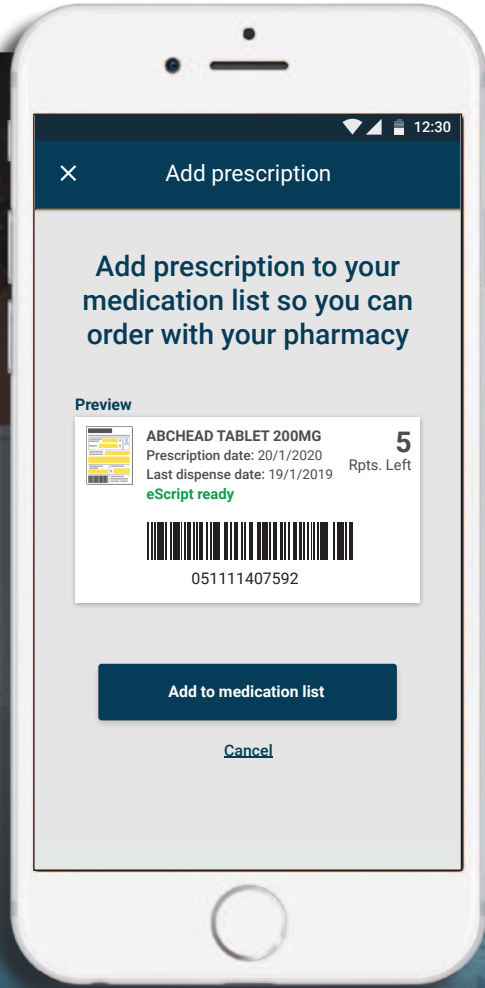




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Victorian CMO scraps 60-day script supply advice

A RECOMMENDATION that Victorian patients should seek a 60-day supply of prescription medicines has been pulled from the State's Chief Medical Officer's (CMO's) website.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, said that while the advice "may have been well meaning it was not helpful in the current circumstances".

Following the CMO's decision to revise the advice to say patients should obtain a 30-day supply,

Tassone told *Pharmacy Daily*, that the initial recommendation had "inadvertently caused much panic in the Victorian community and placed a community pharmacy workforce already under pressure to endure more anxiety from patients who felt it was absolutely necessary to obtain 60 days' supply".

Tassone welcomed the CMO's decision to roll back his advice, but suggested "the genie may well already be out of the bottle".

"The initial advice did not take

into consideration the standard Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) quantity should generally be sufficient for patients to have ongoing supply, pharmacists have legal and professional obligations in order for the supply of prescription medicines to be in accordance with the prescriber's intention and interests of the patient and the very real and unintended consequence of stock-piling by patients triggering medicine shortages meaning others may miss out," he said.

"This could have potentially dire consequences on a health system bracing itself for an unprecedented challenge in meeting the direct demands of what COVID-19 could bring without preventable hospitalisations due to patients inadvertently misusing medicines because there was too much at their home or some missing out altogether."

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Dr Chris Freeman, told *Pharmacy Daily* that he had written to the Australian Medical Association and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to urge their members to refrain from providing regulation 24 prescriptions,



following the Victorian CMO's recommendation.

"What we don't want is a disruption to the supply chain because of stockpiling," Freeman said.

Tassone noted pharmacies have been experiencing supply chain issues, with delayed deliveries in some areas over the weekend.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news, a front cover wrap from **MedAdvisor** plus full pages from:

- Flo
- Amcal

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Reference: 1. Data held on file at Ego Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd.



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What is your pharmacy's risk of cyber attack? **FRED**

RPNA fears big players gaming PBS

PHARMACISTS operating in rural and remote parts of Australia are calling for an urgent review of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) dispensing following a surge in order volumes from "major accounts", which emptied warehouses, in response to concerns over COVID-19.

In a statement issued this morning the Rural Pharmacy Network Australia (RPNA) called on the Community Service Obligation (CSO) Agency to take a deeper look into the "unprecedented run on wholesale stocks of PBS medicines" since the beginning of Mar.

"We believe that order volumes in some cases were six to seven times normal 'beginning of month' volumes and that such quantities cannot be justified on any public health grounds," the RPNA said.

"Our members have reported serious medication shortages including stock unavailability, orders cancelled by wholesalers without explanation and missing deliveries of PBS medicines following unconfirmed but credible reports of some large pharmacy groups placing orders far in excess of reasonable needs.

"No one seems to be denying that

there has been an unprecedented spike in buying.

"If it was consumer demand, there would be a corresponding spike in PBS prescriptions dispensed preceding the big buys.

"The Government/Department of Health should have this data.

"Even if there has been a spike in PBS scripts dispensed this needs to be assessed against the volume of buying that occurred.

"The PBS and the CSO are meant to ensure equity of access to PBS medicines for all Australians but clearly on this occasion that hasn't happened.

"We'd like to know if there have been any breaches [of the CSO Requirement to supply rural and remote pharmacies] this month.

"It looks a lot like the coronavirus crisis has been used by deep-pocketed players as an excuse to game the PBS - a vital national public health institution - for commercial advantage.

"That is something that should alarm public health authorities and result in a major inquiry and possibly even a complete re-think of how the CSO works.

"It's clear that on this occasion, the 'first-in-best-dressed' nature of the



PBS wholesale distribution system has proved to be a vulnerability that has endangered PBS access in rural and some metropolitan areas."

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has noted there have been some issues regarding medicines shortages, but stressed it "is not a national medicine shortage".

"We call on consumers not to purchase more medicines than they need, and we urge health professionals to reassure patients that there is no need to buy more than is necessary," the TGA said.

"We call on pharmacists to avoid over ordering medicines, to help ensure that medicines are available to all Australians who need them."

Sigma opens first WholeLife in Vic

SIGMA Healthcare has opened its first Victorian WholeLife Pharmacy and Healthfood store, in Langwarrin, Melbourne.

The pharmacy is the first of 10 new stores Sigma will open across the country over the next 12 months, and follows a successful trial of the concept in Queensland.

The store is owned by Wael Hanna and Niki Singh, who previously ran the store under Sigma's Discount Drug Store banner.

The official opening took place on Sat, with Sigma CEO, Mark Hooper, in attendance to mark the occasion.

e-Script ready?

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Dispensary Corner

WHILE many patrons of pubs and public transport around the world have been less than adherent of called to practice "social distancing" in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a photo of patients visiting a Moroccan pharmacy has gone viral as they lined up outside the store.

The shoppers (pictured below) outside a Casablanca pharmacy have unwittingly become internet sensations for following World Health Organization (WHO) advice for people to maintain a safe distance from one another to limit the spread of the virus.

The north African nation has 28 confirmed cases of the virus, including 10 new cases confirmed yesterday, with the majority originating from Europe.

The country's Minister for Transport and Logistics, Abdelkader Amara, has been identified as one of the new cases.

Morocco has reported one fatality linked to the virus to date.

The Ministry of Health has reported that all new patients were stable and their condition was not deemed to be "worrying".



Guild's COVID-19 guide

PHARMACY owners are being urged to prepare signage at store entry points asking patients to self-identify as 'at risk' of COVID-19 to allow staff know immediately.

A COVID-19 guide produced by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to be used in conjunction with normal operating protocols.

The Guild is recommending that pharmacies should have a space where pharmacists can isolate patients with suspected COVID-19 infections, and accompanying carers or family.

"The room/area needs to be free of clutter and non-essential furniture and items to make any necessary decontamination easier after the patient/s has left," the Guild said.

"The room/area should have a patient 'support pack' which could include bottled water, disposable tissues and a clinical waste bag.

"There should be a mechanism to ensure there is regular contact between suspected patient/s and designated pharmacy staff whilst



the patient/s are in the isolation room/area.

"Prepare signage for the room/area such as 'Do not enter unless authorised and wearing Personal Protective Equipment' for use as necessary."

The guide also includes details on preparing staff to ensure they are aware of their roles and responsibilities when a patient with COVID-19, and what to do after the presentation has been completed.

CLICK HERE to see the Guild's COVID-19 resources.

Everyday this week **Pharmacy Daily & Plunkett's** are giving away a prize pack including:

1 x John Plunkett's Superfade Accelerator Serum 20ml and 1 x Plunkett's Aloe Vera Facial Mask valued at **\$29.98**.

Specifically created for those who have mild pigmentation concerns, Superfade Accelerator Serum is formulated with pigmentation reducing technology, containing a powerful blend of BHA, AHAs and Ferulic Acid Cytovectors. Superfade Accelerator Serum exfoliates surface discoloration and lightens sun damaged skin. Overnight improvement from day 1 and clinical results after 28 days of daily usage.

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To win, be the first person from NSW or ACT to send the correct answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Name one of the active ingredients in Superfade Accelerator Serum

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Check here tomorrow for today's winner.

Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Dan Gillham, Group ICT Manager, TerryWhite Chemmart.**



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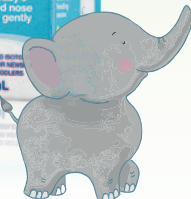


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