

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of pharmacy news, plus a full page from SkinB5.

Tackling acne

ITHERAPEUTICS is providing a professional pharmacy support program for its SkinB5 brand, to assist pharmacists in making clinical interventions for patients with acne.

Pharmacists will also be able to access ongoing marketing support, including help to attract younger patients and parents to seek treatment.

See page four for more.

VPA appointment

COMMUNITY pharmacist, Divesh Sanghvi, has been appointed to the Victorian Pharmacy Authority (VPA), as a pharmacist member.

Be kind to each other in era of change

PHARMACISTS are being urged to "be kind and forgiving to each other" as the profession embraces an era of unprecedented change.

Speaking during an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) COVID-19 webinar last week, the organisation's CEO, Catherine Duggan, said pharmacists were dealing with rapid changes throughout the crisis, and needed to be supportive of each other.

Duggan told delegates pharmacists were seeing immediate implementation of new systems and procedures, adding to the pressure the profession is facing.

"Some of the changes you've seen would normally take six months, minimum, to implement," she said.

"It's worth acknowledging not only are we dealing with this big problem... but on top of it, we're layering it with change upon, change upon change.

"The thing I'm telling my team is - this affords us a bit of elbow-room

if we do make mistakes or if things don't go to plan, let's be kind and forgiving to each other, because we're all doing our best."

Duggan's remarks followed Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Early Career Pharmacist (ECP) Working Group NSW National Representative, Sarah Dineen-Griffin's assessment of the impact the pandemic has had on pharmacy in Australia to date.

"I'm really proud of our profession in terms of continuing its vital role in supporting our communities at the time when we're most needed," Dineen-Griffin said.

"The last couple of months have probably been the most chaotic in pharmacy's history and social distancing has made things very tricky.

"Our entire business model has changed pretty much overnight, with no extra remuneration.

"Compounding on this... we had the bushfire crisis in Australia in Jan... I've seen pharmacists dealing



with a lot of increased workload, panic buying, medicines shortages, off-indication prescribing, the stress of self-isolation and pharmacists risking their health every day to be there for our communities.

"We've had a lot of change here as well...we've had the introduction of both telehealth and digital prescribing, which has driven uptake much faster than it normally would have, and this has required a great deal of flexibility from community pharmacists to take on that challenge."

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Owners committed to staff safety

AMID allegations that pharmacies are failing to adequately protect employees, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia maintains its members believe staff welfare is paramount during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Responding to the findings of a Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) survey, which found 20% of employee pharmacists believes owners were not implementing suitable safety measures, a Guild spokesperson told *Pharmacy Daily* that the organisation recognised the pressures and stress the crisis has put on pharmacy staff, but stressed employee safety was a high priority for its members.

“It has been an extremely challenging environment as pharmacies have stayed open and served patients amid panic buying, medicine shortages and health risks for patients and staff,” the spokesperson said.

“It is not surprising that this

sample survey has uncovered many of those concerns which pharmacy staff are feeling.

“As pharmacy owners, Guild members are well aware of these stresses, and also very mindful of our commitment to ensure a safe working environment for our staff.

“The Guild has done its best to address these concerns by providing pharmacy owners with up-to-date information and other resources to try to adapt to the challenges thrown at pharmacies by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our staff are vital and their welfare is paramount.”

However, the PPA survey reported one-in-three respondents believed their health and safety had been jeopardised by pharmacy owners’ responses to potential exposure to patients with COVID-19.

The survey also reported more than a third of respondents were considering leaving the profession,



claiming to be overloaded by the increased workload being faced as a result of the crisis.

Close to half of respondents said they did not have enough staff to meet professional requirements, while one-in-five reported that they were working overtime without pay.

Pharmacist hero

NEW Zealand pharmacist, Chin Loh, came to the rescue on Sat morning in Dunedin, after a patient’s dog bit another customer outside his pharmacy.

The *New Zealand Herald* reported the female patient had been standing outside the pharmacy in compliance with social distancing requirements, when the small “fluffy” dog latched onto her thigh.

Supported by a passer-by Loh, managed to free the woman from the dog’s jaws, before attending to her injuries.

“We struggled for quite a few minutes before the dog let go, but we were trying not to aggravate it any more or cause any more damage,” Loh said. He added that despite the pain and shock of the incident, the woman had managed to remain calm.

Pharmacists need to be ‘street smart’

PHARMACISTS are being urged to focus on developing their emotional intelligence to manage their stress levels during the COVID-19 crisis, pharmacist and health coach, Allie Xu, believes.

“As pharmacists, we are all intelligent individuals who did well at schools and universities and are continually learning and acquiring new information, knowledge, and research, she said.

“We are all ‘book smart’ with high IQs... however, to be successful in this world, we need to be ‘street smart’ and develop a high level of Emotional Intelligence.

“Self-awareness is the first step of understand our own emotions and managing stress.

“Self-awareness is a conscious, deliberate reflection on personal feelings, desires and how these are associated with perceptions of self in the context of various situations. Empathy and understanding of self. Knowing why emotions occur.

“To be able to manage stress during this crisis, the first step is to pay attention to our emotions.

“Often this is hard when we are so concentrated on patients who are ill and panic buying because of the pandemic.”

NSW expands pharmacists’ vax scope

PHARMACISTS in NSW will be able to provide vaccination services outside of the community pharmacy setting for the first time under new measures announced on Fri (*PD* breaking news).

Welcoming the move Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) NSW Branch President, Professor Peter Carroll, said it would enable pharmacists to support boost vaccination uptake across the state.

“This will be particularly beneficial to people having difficulties accessing vaccinations, such as those who may be housebound or residents

of aged care facilities,” he said.

“At a time when our health care system is under extreme pressure due to COVID-19, increasing options for more people in NSW to access vaccinations is vital.

“We are seeing a particularly large uptake of people accessing the influenza vaccine this year and pharmacists continue to play a role in keeping our communities safe.

“As the peak national body for pharmacists, PSA will continue to work with the NSW Government to remove barriers which restrict pharmacists from administering other vaccines to better protect the community.”

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Dispensary Corner

LAWMAKERS in the US state of Missouri have voted against legislation which would have required them to use cannabis prior to making big decisions. The tongue-in-cheek proposal was an amendment to an already heavily modified healthcare bill, added by Republican representative Andrew McDaniel who said he was hoping to "get everyone to chill out".

The measure said "members of the Missouri House shall consume a substantial dose of medical marijuana prior to entering the chamber or voting on any legislation".

The proposal was defeated by a voice vote, but McDaniel said he was pretty sure he heard a few "ayes" from the room.

THERE'S been a fairly grim COVID-19 inspired innovation in the South American country of Colombia, where a business that usually makes advertising displays has pivoted to create a cardboard bed which can double as a coffin (pictured).

The manager of Bogota-based ABC Displays, Rodolfo Gomez, said he was inspired after seeing COVID-19 casualties mount in nearby Ecuador, with impoverished families unable to afford coffins after loved ones died at home.



Concern over pill decline

PHARMACISTS in Ireland are renewing their push for the oral contraceptive pill to be made available over-the-counter (OTC), after witnessing a 10% drop in dispensing of the medicine since the start of the COVID-19 crisis.

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) also reported a significant decline in the number of women seeking emergency contraception, following the out-break of the virus in Ireland.

IPU Executive Committee Member, Caitriona O'Riordan, said women needed to be made aware that pharmacists were able to extend the maximum validity of a prescription for "the pill" from six months to nine, and that emergency contraceptives are available OTC in pharmacies.

"There could be a number of reasons why fewer women are currently accessing the pill," she said.

"Some may be wary of moving around and visiting a pharmacy, while others may have already



finished their six-month prescription and don't realise that pharmacists can currently extend this.

"We want to reassure everyone that pharmacies are open and operating as normal; they have also put in place stringent physical distancing measures to ensure there is no risk to patients.

"Pharmacists have previously called for the pill to be made available in pharmacies without prescription.

"The drop in use that we are seeing at the moment further emphasises the importance of improving access to contraception.

"This is about giving choice to women, and pharmacists are happy to offer that choice currently; we hope it can be enhanced in future."



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Aaron De Souza, GuildLink.**



Learning from COVID: Connectivity and convenience

It's clear that the coronavirus has led to a surge in eCommerce, as consumers wary of visiting shops amid the lockdown are now shopping online. Comparison site Finder's revealed Chemist Warehouse, for example, recorded a 54% increase in online traffic from March 19 – March 20. That doesn't necessarily mean, however, that community pharmacies should start building eCommerce stores. The latest studies show that the average conversion rate for eCommerce websites is still just 2.86%. Even if you think an eCommerce makes sense now, when customers are reluctant to visit your pharmacy – it might not make sense in, say, six months, when restrictions are likely to have eased. So is it really worth investing the resources required to build an independent eCommerce store at this time? Instead of eCommerce, it's better to think of your online offering in terms of eConvenience. Customers will always want a more convenient experience, so you need to consider the digital infrastructure you can put in place that will make it easier for them to do business with you a post-COVID landscape. This includes: 1) A properly built content-rich website 2) A medicines reminder app 3) An ePrescriptions solution. It's exciting times for pharmacies willing to invest in digital as the share of the customer pie is now up for grabs due to this pandemic shifting expectations and needs.

WIN WITH PLUNKETT'S



Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away a SuperLift Collagen Eye Lift worth RRP\$39.95

John Plunkett's SuperLift Collagen Eye Lift is a day and night eye cream packed with peptides including Matrixyl 3000 and Eyeseryl to boost collagen by 100%, and Hyaluronic Acid to provide cushioning hydration, while Rosehip Oil softens and smoothes delicate skin around the eyes. Effectively targets three causes of ageing – fine line and wrinkles, eyebags and puffiness and dark circles. For more information [click here](#).



Q:Name one of the ingredients in John Plunkett's Collagen Eye Lift? To win send the correct answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au



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