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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news, plus a full page from **Vincent's**.

PD special ed

PHARMACY Daily has today launched its inaugural Health Professional Only edition, which has been sent as a separate email to registered pharmacists.

If you are an AHPRA-registered health professional and have received this edition of PD, please update your details by clicking on the link in the *Pharmacy Daily* email.

JobKeeper tips

ACCOUNTANCY firm, Vincent's will host a special JobKeeper for Pharmacies webinar on Tue 19 May at 6pm Australian Eastern Time. See **page four** for more.

Complex substitution model starts

PHARMACISTS in the ACT, Northern Territory and Queensland are set to be able to substitute prescriptions for type-2 diabetes medication, metformin modified-release 500 mg tablets, under the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) new Serious Medicine Shortage list protocols.

However, pharmacists in other parts of the country will have to wait for state governments to issue authorisations permitting therapeutic substitution, under what the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has described as a "complex process", which was not in line with proposals from the Guild and Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).

Under the TGA notice issued on Wed, pharmacists will be able to replace metformin modified-release 500 mg with either immediate-release metformin 500 mg or metformin modified-release 1,000 mg, depending on the prescribed dose, without approval from the prescriber, until 31 Jul.

"Under the process that has now been implemented, the TGA publishes a Serious Shortage Medicine Substitution Notice (SSMSN) to tell pharmacists what substitutions are, and are not permitted, when medicines are out of stock," a Guild spokesperson said.

The Guild has been advised that each notice will likely require separate consideration of how the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme will allow for medicines substituted under the serious shortage initiative to be eligible as a pharmaceutical benefit.

"The TGA notice of a SSMSN for metformin has highlighted that this is an overly complicated process which may place patients at harm, as pharmacists are not able to work to their full capacity to support their patients when there is a serious medicine shortage.

"This inflexible policy places an inordinate amount of additional pressure on pharmacists to address patient needs due to a medicine



shortage, irrespective of a public health emergency status.

"Pharmacists are medicines experts, and the straightforward dose and form substitutions these notices will allow are within the competence of every pharmacist in Australia to manage individually with their patients.

"The Guild cannot support a complicated system where the TGA needs to publish a SSMSN that must then be recognised under State and Territory law before pharmacists can make dose and form substitutions without the need to consult the prescriber and that is only permitted during a declared emergency."

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*Schrader et al. Human Psychopharmacology. 1998; 13:163-169. Woelk et al. BMJ. 2000; 321:536-539. Schrader et al. Int Clin Psychopharma. 2000; 15:61-68. Brattström et al. J Phymed. 2009; 16:277-283.

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Travel & Cruise Weekly

Pharmacists' safety takes backseat

THROUGHOUT the COVID-19 crisis Australian pharmacists' personal health has taken a backseat so they can serve patients when other primary care providers have closed their doors, the Federal Parliament was told yesterday.

Voicing support for the Government's Therapeutic Goods Amendment (2020 Measure No 1) Bill 2020, which aims to address medicines shortages, pharmacist turned Labor MP, Emma McBride, praised the work of pharmacists during the crisis, and called for the introduction of policies designed to boost domestic drug manufacturing to combat supply shortages.

"Pharmacists have made a considerable contribution on the frontlines—staying open and offering critical services when many other primary care providers were closed," she said.

"Sadly, they've also borne the

brunt of stressed and frightened people, and that has led to stories of violence against pharmacists and pharmacy staff.

"Pharmacists have worked together with the TGA to implement supply restrictions on medicines.

"Hospital pharmacists are managing supplies so that patients in ICU have access to the essential medicines needed—medicines critical for induction on ventilators and preserving life.

"Aged-care pharmacists provide telehealth consultations to deliver much-needed residential medication management.

"Consultant pharmacists provide home medication reviews via telehealth, to support the safe use of medication in the home.

"For many of our most vulnerable Australians who have been forced into isolation, pharmacists are



often the only health-professional contact that those patients have had—be that through the delivery of medication to the home, via telehealth consultations or over the counter in a pharmacy.

"It has been the pharmacist not only providing these services during COVID-19 but encouraging the most vulnerable in the community to reconnect with their local GP or allied health provider when, at times, their own health can take a back seat."

Police charge robbery suspect

WESTERN Australian Police have charged a 35-year-old man in relation to two armed robberies at pharmacies in suburban Perth.

Police alleged the man entered a pharmacy in Maylands on 30 Dec 2019, claiming to be armed and demanding prescription medicines.

The man is also believed to have taken prescription drugs during a raid at an Inglewood pharmacy on 07 May, where staff were threatened.

PerthNow reported that the man was arrested at his home earlier this week and charged on two counts of robbery, one count of "disguised to commit an offence" and one possession of drug paraphernalia.

Guild welcomes Qld digital script move

REGULATORY reforms being introduced by the Queensland Government will enable pharmacists to supply Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines via a digital image, in line with Federal arrangements announced in Mar.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch President, Trent Twomey, said the move, which has been backdated to 26 Mar, was a win for patients and pharmacists.

"The regulation changes have removed a potential community

health barrier, where post-telehealth paper scripts were often taking days to reach pharmacists through the postal system," he said.

"Patients can now have their prescription from prescribers to pharmacies sped up by modern technology as the old-school fax and follow-up is replaced by digital scripts.

"Digital images of prescriptions can be sent to dispense both PBS and private prescriptions. This applies to prescriptions sent by all prescribers."

Royals thank pharmacists everywhere

BRITAIN'S Royal family has issued a note of thanks to pharmacists for their work throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

In a tweet sent from Buckingham Palace's official Twitter account, the Windsors praised pharmacy workers for their support of communities around the globe, using the hashtag #PharmacyHeroes.

"This #ThankfulThursday, we are paying tribute to pharmacists and pharmacies everywhere, who are working tirelessly to keep people healthy and safe,

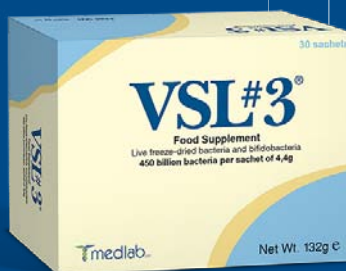
whilst under huge pressure," the tweet said.

"To all the pharmacies that are relied on by their local communities - thank you."

The thread noted that Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, is patron of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), and described the organisation as being "instrumental in providing COVID-19 clinical guidance".

The Royals praised pharmacists for providing safe spaces in their stores for the victims of abuse during the pandemic.

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Dispensary Corner

HOW about this for some winter giftware suggestions?

A Japanese couple has created unique headgear for their cats, using fur that the felines have shed themselves.

Ryo Yamazaki and his wife got the idea after brushing their cats and not wanting the clumps of shedded fur to go to waste.

A felting technique is used to make the so-called Nukege hats (pictured) which the pair feature in a range of poses on their Instagram feed @rojiman.



Students show worth

PHARMACY students from Monash University who have been undergoing practical placements during the COVID-19 crisis are being praised for their contribution to supporting pharmacy services.

Speaking on an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar on experiential learning during the pandemic, Monash University Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Experiential Department and Graduate Education, Senior Lecturer, Simon Furletti, highlighted the efforts of student pharmacists.

"We've got repeated feedback from sites about how our students were allowing sites to cope with the surges [in demand] they were experiencing," he said.

"[Our students were] allowing them to continue service provision, and they couldn't do it without them.

"It was fantastic to hear how our students were actually grasping at that.

"It allowed the students to be more confident and understand their role, and they really felt empowered to go out and do their role."

Furletti noted that a number of



students had families either in Wuhan or other areas around the world where they were directly affected by COVID-19, and were concerned about the students' safety.

"They had family members telling them that they were at a huge amount of risk going out into the pharmacy setting during a pandemic," he said.

"We had to really discuss with those particular student populations in terms of what it's like to be a health profession, how to handle that, and how to handle their family."

Furletti said Monash's approach had been "really successful" with no reports of student anxiety as a result of the support and communication provided to students.

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Health literacy flaws exposed

COVID-19 has exposed a "disturbing lack of knowledge about germs and antibiotics" new research reveals.

In an article published in *The Conversation*, experts noted 92% of Australians do not know the difference between viral and bacterial infections, while one-in-four had never heard of antibiotic resistance.

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 Eyseryl 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: What is one of the causes of ageing around the eyes?
 To win send the correct answer to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

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