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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news and a full page from **Rehydraid**.

PD tipping off

THE COVID-19 pandemic has led to the cancellation of a number of key events in the pharmacy calendar, with the popular *Pharmacy Daily* AFL, and NRL footy tipping competitions being abandoned for the 2020 season.

Unfortunately the general uncertainty around the seasons and potential for ongoing schedule changes means it's just not practical to continue the tipping this year, according to *Pharmacy Daily* Head of Marketing, Sean Harrigan.

We hope to have the tipping comps back in 2021.



Seqirus to deliver fresh flu vax stock

VACCINE manufacturer, Seqirus, will distribute one million doses of its influenza vaccine to pharmacies and general practices over the next three weeks.

The refreshed supplies announced this morning form part of the three million additional doses secured by the Federal Government last month (*PD* 20 Apr), in response to increased demand for the flu vaccine this year.

With many pharmacies having already exhausted their pre-ordered stock, a spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, told *Pharmacy Daily* that the Seqirus announcement was "very welcome", and should replenish supplies for patients seeking access to the vaccination through the community pharmacy setting.

Seqirus Executive Director Commercial Operations, Danielle Dowell, said the business had restarted its flu vaccine production in an effort to ensure as many Australians as possible can receive the vaccination in 2020.

"We've seen extremely strong demand for flu vaccines this year – it's fantastic to see so many Australians listening to expert advice on the importance of flu



vaccination programs," she said.

"For those who haven't yet had their flu vaccine – there is now additional stock rolling out across the country in the next few weeks - please check with your GP or pharmacy first around availability.

"The Seqirus manufacturing team in Victoria have been working incredibly hard to turn around these additional doses so that as many Australians as possible can protect themselves from flu, because we know that flu vaccination programs will be more important than ever due to the

COVID-19 pandemic."

The Australian-based manufacturer is set to deliver a further million doses for the private market in the coming weeks, as part of the Government's efforts to safeguard against a severe flu season coinciding with a potential spike in cases of COVID-19.

A spokesperson for Seqirus told *Pharmacy Daily* that the vaccines will be allocated equitably on a demand basis, but said "we encourage community pharmacies to get their orders in".

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AUSTRALIAN MEDICINES HANDBOOK

Qld border closure fuels break-ins

PHARMACIES in South East Queensland are at an increased risk of being burgled because of the state's COVID-19 induced border closure, a Gold Coast pharmacist believes.

Biggera Waters pharmacist, Amin Javanmard, told the *ABC* that the decision to shut the state off from NSW had cut access to illegal prescription medications, which had sparked an increase in smash-and-grab break-ins at pharmacies (*PD* 25 May).

"The border closure has been difficult to get anything through the NSW/Queensland border which has obviously contributed to a lack of supply," he said.

"There has also been changes in how difficult it is for people to see doctors on an ad-hoc basis and that we feel has contributed to a decrease in supply on the streets as well."

"It is not coming over the border, it is harder for people to get it



prescribed but obviously the demand is still there."

The national broadcaster noted that at least eight South East Queensland pharmacies have been targeted by criminals since the Palaszczuk Government implemented its border shutdown in Mar.

Javanmard warned the threat to pharmacies was likely to

increase as measures to reduce the prescribing of long-acting pain medications are implemented.

"Things like a long-acting opioid pain killer especially are going to be a lot harder to prescribe and get subsidised in the future," he said.

"That may make that supply harder to make its way onto the illicit market."

Consumers first

NPS MedicineWise and the Consumers Health Forum have launched a new working together agreement.

The partnership aims to build on the two organisations' collaboration over the past 20 years to ensure consumers are at the centre of quality use of medicines and better health decision-making, across the

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PSA launches e-script support hotline

AS AUSTRALIA'S health professionals transition to the use of electronic prescriptions, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is launching a support line to help pharmacists adjust to new workflows.

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, welcomed the Federal Government's move to a staged and planned implementation of formal e-scripts, as opposed to the digital image-base scripts that prescribers have been providing since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, which he said put significant pressure on pharmacists, with unclear laws. Freeman said the shift to

the token and active script list models for e-scripts would deliver "a safer, clearer and more secure electronic prescribing model, which protects patients' privacy and safety".

"I would urge any pharmacist or pharmacy support staff member to utilise the support line which will not only benefit them but in turn help pharmacies better educate their patients and members of the public on how electronic prescriptions work," he said.

The support line will be open Mon to Fri between 8.30am and 5.00pm on 1300 955 162 or by email - ep@psa.org.au.

TWC flu jab on track for 500k

TERRYWHITE Chemmart (TWC) is on track to deliver 500,000 doses of influenza vaccines across its network.

TWC CEO, Duncan Phillips, said demand for flu vaccines across the country had seen the group administer more doses in the first four weeks of its 2020 service than in the entire 2019 flu season.

"Now that we have a new supply of stock, we are on track to vaccinate more Australians this year than the last two seasons combined," he said.

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Dispensary Corner

THREE boys from Bolivia have had a lucky escape after they were bitten by a black widow spider.

The trio, clearly Hollywood aficionados, had watched the movie Spiderman and mistakenly believed being bitten by an arachnid would give them super powers.

The boys, aged 12, 10 and eight, spotted the spider while tending goats near their village of Chayanta, and poked the creature with a stick.

Suitably antagonised it bit all three of them, and they quickly started to show symptoms from the poisonous venom including pain, sweating, fever & tremors.

The boys ended up in hospital in La Paz where an antiserum eventually saw them make a full recovery.

HEALTH officials in the USA have warned of a further consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak, with a potential increase in "aggressive rodent behaviour".

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says community-wide closures of restaurants have led to a decrease in food available to rodents, especially in dense commercial areas.

"Some jurisdictions have reported an increase in rodent activity as rodents search for new sources of food.

"Environmental health and rodent control programs may see an increase in service requests related to rodents and reports of unusual or aggressive rodent behaviour," the CDC said.

Blackmores seeks capital

BLACKMORES Limited this morning announced a \$117 million capital raising to "position the balance sheet for strength," with the impact of COVID-19 driving sales down due to lower shopping traffic.

The company is undertaking a fully underwritten placement which will see about 1.3 million new shares issued, equivalent to 7.3% of the company's current shares on issue.

The placement is being conducted at \$72.50 per new share, a discount of 8.1% to the company's closing price yesterday.

Eligible shareholders in Australia and New Zealand will also be offered the opportunity to apply for up to \$30,000 of new Blackmores shares at the same price, with the company targeting \$25 million from this share purchase plan.

However the company's major shareholder, Marcus Blackmore (pictured), said he would not be participating in the equity raise.

"Along with my Charitable Foundation I am personally pleased to support Blackmores announced capital raising," he said.

"Unfortunately I am unable to participate in the equity raising at this time, however Blackmores has been an integral part of my family since 1932 and needless to say I am



absolutely committed to being a long term shareholder," he said.

Blackmores has suspended its ordinary share dividend payments "to conserve cash for operations" and also worked with lenders to provide additional flexibility through until Jun 2021.

As well as bolstering the balance sheet, the capital raising will help accelerate growth in Asia and assist with investments in supply and IT in order to make Blackmores' manufacturing and business processes more efficient.

While COVID-19 had seen a material increase in demand for immunity products, these only comprise a small part of the Blackmores portfolio and the boost has been offset by lag in other products due to a decline in retail traffic and supply chain constraints.

TGA issues Andrographis safety advisory

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has advised that products containing the herb *Andrographis paniculata* (Andrographis) may be associated with changes in the sense of taste, including potential complete loss of taste.

Andrographis is a herbal ingredient permitted for use in

low-risk medicines in Australia, contained in about 100 items listed in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

Also known as the "king of bitters" Andrographis is a herb commonly used in Indian and Chinese medicine to support immune function and relieve symptoms of mild fever.

New SHPA CPD

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia has relaunched its CPD program, with all national seminars to feature virtual delivery from Sep 2020.

The sessions will be supported by face-to-face and self-paced online learning, with a new-look CPD program helping pharmacists schedule their learning - shpa.org.au.

Win With Aromababy

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and AROMABABY are giving away a set of their products worth RRP\$39.95

Aromababy is celebrating 25 years of caring for sensitive skin. From newborn to older children, choose from a complete range of naturally soothing products to cleanse, moisturise, protect and pamper. Offering a variety of unscented options, AROMABABY prides itself on a long history of safety and efficacy as a pharmacy specialist brand. To learn more about the products click [HERE](#).

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