

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news.

## MedAdvisor funding boost

MEDADVISOR has successfully raised \$35 million through an institutional placement and its non-renounceable entitlement offer, paving the way for the completion of the acquisition of Adheris Health (PD 03 Nov).

The deal will see the MedAdvisor Group become a leader in tailored opt-out, direct to patient medication adherence programs in the US, the company's CEO, Robert Read, said.

"This is a transformational deal for MedAdvisor which will bring digital to Adheris' enormous scale and its ability to reach one in two Americans on an opt-out basis," he said.

Read adds the additional capabilities delivered through Adheris were critical for the expansion of the company's offering in Australia and around the world.

## No rush to buy COVAX freezers

PHARMACY owners should not be in a rush to purchase freezers to store the promising Pfizer/BioNTech mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine at this stage, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, believes.

With the candidate vaccine requiring storage at minus 70°C, Tassone called on State and Federal Governments to provide assistance to primary care providers, including pharmacists and GPs to ensure they have access to appropriate cold chain facilities.

"The anticipated potential required storage requirements of the COVID-19 vaccine needing to be below 0°C will be a challenge for the healthcare system broadly to address whether it be community pharmacies, general practice, local government or other tertiary healthcare institutions," he said.

"Pharmacies should not be rushing to purchase freezers in anticipation of the COVID vaccine until it is confirmed what are the exact required storage requirements for the vaccines that are distributed for the Australian population, and what pharmacy's role will be in that mass vaccination program."



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"Both State and Federal Governments have a role to play in providing support to the healthcare system to equip them with the necessary capability of storing this vaccine according to its requirements – where no other medication or vaccine that is usually handled in the primary healthcare system requires this.

"The Guild is in close and ongoing discussions with the Federal Government about the role that pharmacists and community pharmacy can and will play in the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine from next year."

Former Pharmaceutical Society of Australia President, Shane Jackson, told **Pharmacy Daily** that given the uncertainty about timeframe and

distribution logistics he "wouldn't be suggesting that community pharmacies need to upgrade their fridges at this point in time".

"Community pharmacy is in a similar position to general practice, and at this stage we need to ensure that we are coordinating efforts that are aligned with the national response," he said.

"One would suggest that community pharmacy needs to be included in the distribution considerations.

"If there are special requirements above that which are normally required, there would be an expectation that government would support this distribution and any special requirements associated with it."

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## Minfos support

**PHARMACY** software provider, Minfos, has launched a new cloud-based Help Centre, offering a one-stop educational library and support hub.

Symbion General Manager of Pharmacy Technology, Andrew Hall, said the Minfos Help Centre was “more user friendly and resource rich than ever before”.

“The goal is to deliver comprehensive education resources that are quick to find, access and use. This means a well-curated Help Centre that delivers short, effective content and an easy learning experience,” he said.

Hall said the Help Centre would continue to evolve and that support would still be available by phone and email.

**CLICK HERE** for more.

## NSW Guild Committee gets new look

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch elections have seen incumbents go head-to-head in two constituencies, with nine current members to sit on the 12 seat committee.

Results released by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) revealed Branch President, David Heffernan, has secured the South Coast seat, supplanting the challenge of Gregory Cordin.

National Councillor, Catherine Bronger, claimed the South West Sydney constituency seeing off Branch Treasurer, Feras Karem and Maggie Rouchdi.

In the Blue Mountains, Central West and New England electorate, National Councillor, Paul Jones, retained his place on the committee ahead of Mark Douglas and Alexandra Keipert.

Former Branch President, Rick Samimi, edged out Jacinta

McDonald, to take the North Sydney and Northern Beaches seat, while current committee member, Richard Walsh, took the Sydney and Eastern Suburbs spot, ahead of branch colleague, Caroline Diamantis, and Eric Chan.

In the West and Far West region, Luke van der Rijt, saw off competition from committee incumbent, Sally Sheehan, making him one of three candidate who were not on the previous branch committee to secure a seat, with former committee member, Tim Hewitt, taking top spot in the Illawarra and Southern Sydney ballot, and Robert King winning on the Central Coast.

Current committee members, John Black (North Coast), Judith Plunkett (Mid North Coast), Adele Tahan (Inner West) and Mario Barone (Greater Western Sydney) have also secured seats,



while Karen Carter, Greg Everett and Binh Luu did not contest the election.

The results of the Victorian Branch's three contested districts have also been announced, with Sam El-Ahmad taking out District 2, ahead of Vihung Kapadia.

Committee member, Marylin Tsitonakis, was returned in District 3, seeing off the challenge of Ahmad Rafei, with Bruce Robertson retaining his seat as the representative for the State's District 11, ahead of Darshan Bhuta.

## McMillan to represent APC on PSS Board

**THE** Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has joined the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS), with Associate Professor, Faye McMillan, being appointed to the PSS Board.

PSS President, John Coppock, welcomed the addition of the APC to the organisation's membership.

“We are delighted to welcome APC involvement in PSS,” he said.

“APC has a critical role accrediting Australian pharmacy education programs and assessing competency of pharmacists prior to registration.

“These foundational activities undertaken by APC are essential in setting the scene for the wellbeing of pharmacists throughout their career.

“We particularly welcome Faye as she will bring a new perspective to PSS with her background in Indigenous health and her experience in education.”

The full PSS Board now features:

- Australian Friendly Societies

Pharmacies Association (AFSPA) – Peter Fell

- Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) – Faye McMillan
- National Australian Pharmacy Students Association (NAPSA) – Kathryn Mayanja
- Pharmaceutical Defence Ltd (PDL) – Curtis Ruhnau
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) – Jarrod McMaugh
- Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria Ltd (PSV) – John Jackson (PSS Vice-President)
- Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PGA) – Stan Goma
- Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) – Cardin Le
- Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) – Jerry Yik (PSS Treasurer).

The PSS is focused on the mental health and wellbeing of pharmacists in Australia, providing peer-to-peer support over the phone every day between 8am and 11pm AEDT, on 1300 244 910.

**CLICK HERE** for more.

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## Biosimilar confidence on the rise

**PHARMACISTS** are reporting growing confidence in biosimilar medications, a new report from the Generic Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA) reveals.

The 2020 *Biosimilar Medicine Market Research Report* found community pharmacists' experience with biosimilar medicines has increased significantly over the last four years, with 69% reporting that they had dispensed a biosimilar, compared with 39% in 2016.

The report also found that community pharmacists had "high levels of confidence in biosimilar medicines with 88% confidence in comparability [with biological medicines], 86% confidence in efficacy and 84% confidence in counselling a patient on a biosimilar medicine".

Of the major stakeholder groups surveyed as part of the research, community pharmacists were the most confident group when it



came to substituting a biological medicine with a biosimilar, while hospital pharmacists expressed the least confidence in doing so.

However, both hospital and community pharmacists had the highest levels of confidence when it came to counselling patients about biosimilars.

GPs reported the lowest

confidence in biosimilars, and also were the most likely to cite that insufficient information was a barrier to prescribing biosimilars.

The report found that all stakeholder groups felt there was a need to increase understanding of biosimilar medicines in the general community, particularly around general education and accessibility.

### Let us do more

**WELCOMING** the appointment of Yvette D'Ath as Queensland's new Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), has reiterated calls for a Chief Pharmacist for the State.

PSA Queensland Branch President, Shane McDonald, said he looked forward to working with D'Ath to "unlock the tremendous contribution pharmacists make".

"We will also urge the Government to allow pharmacists to directly administer more routine medicines for Queenslanders," he said.

"This will improve patients' management of complex health conditions no matter where they live and we will continue to reiterate the imperative to appoint a Chief Pharmacist for Queensland."

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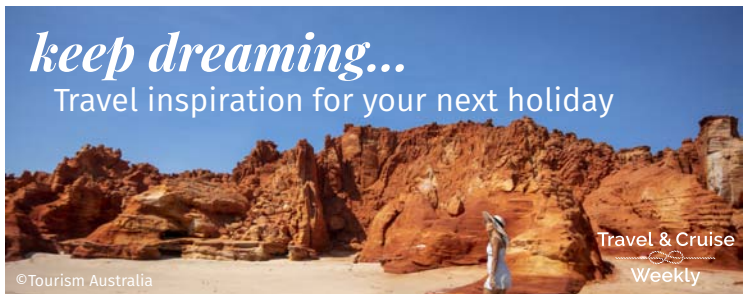
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## Dispensary Corner

**GOOD** for the economy - but perhaps not so good for the dentist bills?

Citizens of India are being urged to increase their consumption of sugar, with the country currently experiencing a glut of the sweet stuff.

The Indian Sugar Mills Association said Indians consume about 19kg of sugar each year - well below the global average - and production is expected to rise 13% this year.

The Association has launched a new website aiming to "bust myths" about sugar and its health effects, featuring a range of recipes for sweets and tips from celebrity chefs under the theme "Eat, Drink & Be Healthy: a little sugar is not all that bad".

The site also takes aim at artificial sweeteners, suggesting they do not help people lose weight and can also have other adverse health consequences.

The push is being backed by the country's Food Secretary, Sudhanshu Pandey, who said sugar's negative reputation was undeserved.

"There are a lot of myths going around about sugar and sugar consumption without scientific basis," he insisted.

The campaign is a stark contrast to public health initiatives in other nations, where there have been significant campaigns to reduce sugar consumption particularly in soft drinks and juices.

Currently about 50 million farmers in India are engaged in sugarcane cultivation, alongside millions more in sugar mills.

## QLD Guild focused on close the gap

**PHARMACY** Guild of Australia Queensland Branch President, Trent Twomey, reiterated the organisation's commitment to improving access to healthcare services for Indigenous Australia, when unveiling a new painting to celebrate NAIDOC week.

Twomey highlighted the Branch had developed the Guild's first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (*PD 09 Nov*), saying it aimed to "change the way we engage with First Nations people" and "make a real tangible difference in closing the gap."

"We hope the RAP will provide positive healthcare outcomes and help close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through Queensland's network of almost 1,200 community pharmacies," he said.

"Our RAP will support the wider community, by developing closer relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and



organisations.

"Where possible we're working to assist in the delivery of better primary healthcare outcomes, by investigating opportunities to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People or organisations to improve the community pharmacy services we provide."

The painting, Wurarr-Wurarr by Kuku Yalanji Language First Nation

artist, Deann Grant, from the Daintree Rainforest in Far North Queensland, depicts the importance of freshwater creeks, rainforest streams and waterholes to the lifecycle of the Wurarr-Wurarr dragonfly, is on display at the Queensland Branch office.

**Pictured**, Guild Queensland Branch President, Trent Twomey, with Branch Vice President, Chris Owen.

### Win with Plunkett's

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### PDL SA/NT vote

**PHARMACISTS** from South Australia and the Northern Territory are being urged to have their say in the Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) South Australia/ Northern Territory Director election.

Incumbent Director, Paula Kwan, is contesting the seat against NPS MedicineWise CEO, Steve Morris, and former Pharmacy Guild of Australia SA Branch President, Ian Todd.

Candidate statements are available **HERE**.

Online voting is being overseen by Computershare.

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