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Employers not engaging with PPA

EMPLOYEE pharmacists' union, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA), is increasingly having to resort to legal avenues to resolve disputes between its members and pharmacy owners, President, Dr Geoff March, reports.

In his annual report, March said the union, which is part of Professionals Australia (PA), had seen an 8% growth in membership over the last 12 months.

March noted that PA data showed the PA's national legal and industrial staff had dealt with 255 matters on behalf of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in the year to 31 Oct.

"This made up 14% of all Workplace and Advisory Service (WAS) team's work," he said.

"Pharmacy employees continue to have a higher proportion of individual employment issues than any other group of PA members."

The PA data revealed 13% of cases raised for PPA members were Pharmacy Board of Australia notifications, with March saying the organisation "very rarely has to assist members with notifications regarding their performance to their respective regulatory bodies".

"PPA members were also more



likely than other PA members to seek advice and representation on leave entitlements (7%), wage theft (7%), and obtaining award, National Employment Standards and enterprise entitlements (16%," he said.

"It has been noticed over the last year or so that pharmacy employers are becoming less likely to resolve matters in discussions with the union.

"As a result, many of the matters raised by our members result in an increasing need for PA staff to resort to litigation in the Fair Work Commission or the Federal Court in order to ensure our PPA

members obtain their legal rights."

March added that during the COVID-19 pandemic pharmacists had reported "significant increases in workload, stress and aggressive patients".

Pharmacy workers who are struggling with anxiety and/or stress can contact the Pharmacists' Support Service on 1300 244 910 to help.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from Jobst.

CHP Australia Industry Update

Our newly confirmed Board Chairperson & Directors

Directors confirmed at AGM:

- Alison Holland - Aspen Pharmacare Australia
- Charmaine England - Johnson & Johnson Consumer Health Pacific
- Anish Patel - GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare Australia

Directors appointed to fill skills-based vacancies:

- Phil Lynch - Independent Director
- Dr Aniss Chami - Vitex Pharmaceuticals
- David Rankine - RB

Phil Lynch was also appointed Board Chairperson following the retirement of Lindsay Forrest.

They join existing Board Directors:

- Jonathan Biddle - Care Pharmaceuticals
- Andrew Jenkin - iNova Pharmaceuticals
- Alan Oppenheim - Ego Pharmaceuticals
- Stephen Walker - Sanofi-Aventis Healthcare

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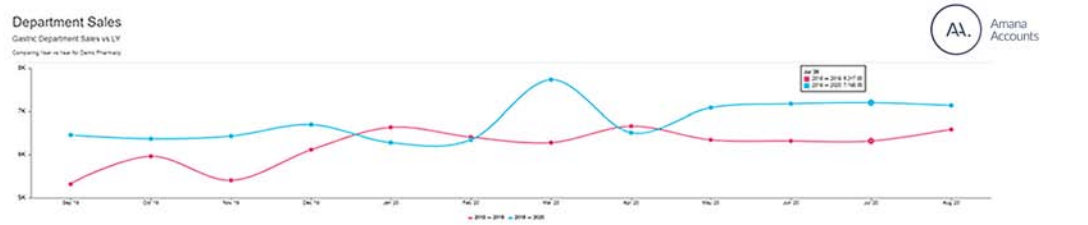
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FIP advice on COVID-19 tests

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) SARS-CoV-2 Testing Working Group has issued a guidance document evaluating COVID-19 diagnostic and testing methods and devices.

The document provides information on the different types of tests available, how they work and the interpretation of results.

FIP Clinical Biology Section President and working group lead, Julien Fonsart, said the document was intended to be useful to a broad range of pharmacists, "whether they provide point-of-care tests or not".

The document noted that "tests are not perfect and can occasionally give the wrong result...tests run too early or late may give a false negative."

CLICK HERE for more.

NSW DDL approved for pharmacy ID

PHARMACISTS will be able to accept the NSW digital driver licence (DDL) as an appropriate form of identification for patients purchasing products containing pseudoephedrine, under new legislation passed by the NSW State Government.

The amendments to the NSW Road Transport Act 2013 give the DDL the same legal status as the plastic driver licence.

Prior to the passage of the legislation, NSW Minister for Customer Service, Victor, Dominello, told the State Legislative Assembly that the DDL would provide a COVID-safe way for pharmacists to identify patients seeking pseudoephedrine-based medications (PD 14 Oct).

"Following enactment of the bill, pharmacists selling pseudoephedrine will have the benefit of being able to confirm the identity of their customers without having to touch their licence card," he said.



"The enhanced security of the digital driver licence will provide better assurance to industries, such as pharmacies, in considering issues like fraud when they are dealing with customer transactions and purchases.

"The increased security measures that come with the digital driver licence will better protect privacy and security and also detect criminal behaviour in relation to

wrongful usage of driver licences."

The passage of the legislation follows a successful trial at five pharmacies across the state in Jul (PD 18 Sep).

Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch President, David Heffernan, has previously told *Pharmacy Daily* that the move would support pharmacists when recording patients' IDs as part of Project Stop.

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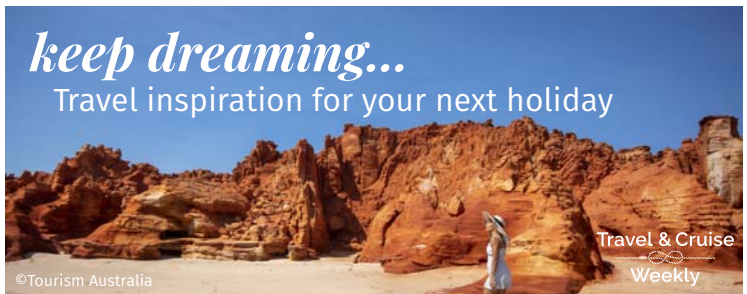
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Dispensary Corner

THE authors of a recently published scientific paper have attempted to distance themselves from allegations that they claimed jade amulets could help protect people from coronavirus infection.

Moses Bility from the University of Pittsburgh was probably thrilled when his paper on Traditional Chinese Medicine was published in the Elsevier peer-reviewed journal *Science of the Total Environment* last month.

However he changed his tune after its suggestions that “nephrite-jade amulets, a calcium ferromagnesian silicate, may prevent COVID-19” attracted widespread attention on social media.

The now-withdrawn paper also argues that “severe COVID-19 outbreaks are coupled to serpentinization-associated water dynamics” as well as “magnetic anomalies in Proterozoic cratons”.

Bility, who is African American, initially accused those who ridiculed his conclusions of “racism and intellectual intolerance,” and has since confirmed plans to re-issue the paper after removing the names of his co-authors who have been mocked for their participation.

“The conceptual understanding and far-reaching implications of such an unconventional approach and complex idea that employed concepts/frameworks from geology, geophysics and Condensed Matter Physics may not have been fully clear to them all,” he said.

Pharmacy free flu vax

THE Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) is calling for a free influenza vaccination program for children aged two to 12-years, to be extended to include teenagers.

The push comes amid reports that uptake of the nasal vaccine has been lower than anticipated, with the IPU warning that a significant proportion of the 600,000 doses ordered by the Irish Health Service Executive (HSE) will expire unused if the age range for the free vaccination is not increased, *thejournal.ie* reports.

With the country experiencing a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, IPU Committee Member, Jonathon Morrissey, said it was important to boost flu vaccination rates across the country.

“It is very concerning that there has been such a low uptake in parents getting their children vaccinated, despite a very high-profile campaign by the HSE



advertising that the vaccine is available for free to children,” he said.

“We currently can’t stop COVID-19 but we can stop flu. “We should all do what we can to protect our health service and the vulnerable members of our community.

“Reducing the risk of children and teenagers spreading flu is one important step.”

Pharmacist facing criminal charges

US PHARMACIST, Dr Xavier Tato, is facing criminal charges over allegations that he assisted a patient’s suicide attempt, *Michigan Live* reports.

Moves to suspend Tato from the profession were dismissed last week at the request of the State Attorney-General’s Office, which stated that a settlement had been reached between the state and Tato.

Prosecutors alleged that a patient suffering chronic pain told Tato that he wanted to kill himself and asked for assistance.

Investigators claimed the pharmacist taught the patient how he could suicide



and provided the necessary medications to do so.

However, the patient survived the attempted suicide, which led to the suspension of Tato’s licence and an order for his Ann Arbor pharmacy to be closed pending a Michigan Board of Pharmacy hearing last week.

Guild Update

Award for NT pharmacy

THE Northern Territory’s Hibiscus Day and Night Pharmacy has won the Business Customer Service award category in the 27th Chief Minister’s NT Export and Industry Awards.

The awards this year recognised businesses which have Reshaped, Adapted and Revived in these difficult times.

Presented by Chief Minister Michael Gunner across 16 categories, the key theme was recognition of resilient Territory exporters and industry leaders in response to the COVID-19 economic, financial and global uncertainty.

Hibiscus Day and Night Pharmacy won the award for its contribution and dedication in business continuity and adaptability.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia NT Branch congratulated Marcus Leong, Sin Hui and all the pharmacy staff for winning such a prestigious award.

“During these difficult times, it’s always wonderful to see recognition for the hard work our frontline workers are doing,” a spokesperson said.



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