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Pharmacists working to pay childcare

HIGH childcare costs are blocking new parents from returning to the pharmacy workforce, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) President, Dr Geoff March, believes.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, the union boss said many pharmacists who have had children are “simply working to pay childcare fees”.

“Childcare is expensive, and a barrier for many pharmacists wanting to return to their careers after having children,” he said.

“Women should be able to return to work, and their careers, to earn money not just pay for childcare.”

March expressed disappointment at the Federal Government’s failure to provide greater support for childcare in last week’s Budget.

“Pharmacists have been on the front line of the fight to keep our community healthy and safe,” he said.

“For a short period, they were able to see what life would be like if they could earn a living wage without the burden of childcare fees.



“Our members are disappointed the Morrison Government has wound back these measures and that there is very little for women in the Budget.

“We know that when the Government childcare subsidies are increased, so too is women’s participation in the workforce.

“Now more than ever we need accessible and affordable childcare to support families to get back to work.”

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, said childcare subsidies were important to all Australians, “with pharmacy staff no exception”.

“With community pharmacy staff considered essential workers and having been able to continue to work in pharmacies as a permitted business throughout COVID restrictions in Victoria - appropriate support for childcare services is of importance to ensure that there is no disruption or interruption to our workforce who have parental responsibilities,” he said.

Meanwhile, PPA’s March added that there is a need for employers to provide flexible working arrangements and facilities for breastfeeding mothers to support women to return to the pharmacy workforce.



National Self-Care Blueprint

Last Wednesday, Health Minister, Hon Greg Hunt MP, launched the Mitchell Institute’s latest paper *Self-care for health: a national policy blueprint*.

CHP Australia joined more than 50 health experts & stakeholders in endorsing the blueprint, which outlines a suite of evidence-based proposals to support self-care through health policy & practice.

Additionally, the report illustrates how the benefits of self-care extend beyond the individual with economic modelling revealing the cost saving potential of self-care in Australia to be between \$1,300-\$7,515 per hospital patient p.a.

Prof Rosemary Calder explains;

“COVID has shown how central self-care is to everyone’s good health. Now is the time for a systematic approach.”

“The same strong leadership from governments and health experts that has been so effective throughout the pandemic needs to be applied to improving the self-care of all Australians”

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Tong honoured

ALFRED Health Deputy Director of Pharmacy, Dr Erica Tong, has been honoured with the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia's (SHPA) Australian Clinical Pharmacy Award.

SHPA President, Peter Fowler, highlighted Tong's visionary leadership of Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting (PPMC) in Victoria, which has helped to reduce medicine-related errors.

"This award also recognises Erica's dedication to supporting the next generation of hospital pharmacists, through her role as SHPA General Medicine Chair, developing the recently-published General Medicine Standard of Practice and developing the General Medicine Advanced Training Residency," he said.

Tong will accept the award at the 2020 SHPA Virtual Congress.

PSA issues Qld election 2020 wishlist

GREATER injection rights, a Chief Pharmacist and funding for transition-of-care pharmacists are on the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Queensland Branch's State election wish-list.

In a pre-election plea, PSA Queensland Branch President, Shane McDonald, called on politicians from across the spectrum to back reforms to extend the scope of pharmacists in the State, to improve the health of Queenslanders.

"PSA urges all political parties to allow pharmacists to administer more routine medicines, such as injectable buprenorphine, insulin or Vitamin B12, to improve Queensland patients' management of complex health conditions," he said.

"Pharmacists are skilled in administering simple injections however, Queensland law currently limits the medicines which can be administered to some vaccines and adrenaline.

"Amending regulations will

remove the barrier artificially preventing pharmacists from providing safe, convenient and timely healthcare to Queenslanders and be at no cost to the Queensland Government."

McDonald said that establishing and funding transition-of-care pharmacists in all tertiary hospitals across the State could help reduce the burden and cost of care related to medication-related readmissions.

"Employing transition-of-care pharmacists to work with the patient's care team through outpatient consultations or providing services can reduce medicine harm," he said.

"Whether this be through reviewing medicines for patients who had experienced a heart attack, phoning patients to help safely wean doses of steroid medicines or coordinating medicines for patients with complex medicine profiles."

The PSA leader added the appointment of a Chief Pharmacist would provide strategic leadership



in improving medicines safety.

"The absence of a Chief Pharmacist in Queensland during COVID-19 saw delays in implementing vital initiatives to support continuing medicine supply, such as digital image prescriptions and electronic prescriptions," McDonald said.

"A Chief Pharmacist is needed to provide advice and leadership for timely government responses to emergencies as they occur and to deliver on Queensland's commitment to Australia's 10th National Health Priority Area: *The Safe and Quality Use of Medicines.*"

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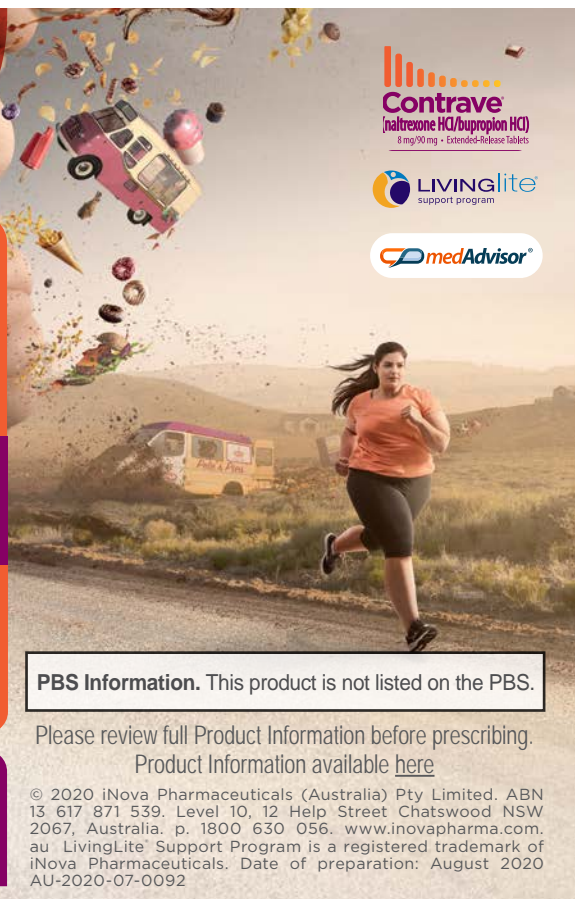
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Dispensary Corner

CONTROVERSY has erupted in the UK over an open letter urging a "herd immunity" approach to COVID-19, after some of the supposedly eminent medicos who signed it were found to be fake.

The so-called Great Barrington Declaration was claimed to have been backed by more than 15,000 scientists and health professionals from around the world, but *Sky News* has analysed the signatories and found supporters include someone called "Dr Johnny Bananas" and "Professor Cominic Dummings".

The name of another supposed specialist promoting the measure was "Dale a tu cuerpo alegria Macarena" - the first verse of the popular Macarena dance song - while others in the list included a graduate of "the university of your mum".

The online declaration has also been signed by academics from a range of eminent academic institutions across the globe, but allows anyone to add their name to the list if they provide an email address, home city, postcode and name.

The declaration calls for a "focused protection" approach to COVID-19 as an alternative to lockdowns until a vaccine is available, saying the economic impact of such measures will cause "irreparable damage".

However other experts have described it as "a very bad idea" with vulnerable people likely to suffer disproportionately if the virus is allowed to run rampant.

PATY finalists named

THE eight finalists for the 2020 Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year Award (PATY) have been named with the winners of the State and Territory awards set to go head-to-head on 30 Oct in a virtual event.

Announcing the State and Territory winners, Guild National President, George Tambassis, praised the valuable contributions the pharmacy assistants have made to the profession.

"This award recognises pharmacy assistants who go the extra mile to help our customers - which is critical to the future success of the pharmacy industry as our range of services to the public continues to grow," he said.

"The calibre of PATY nominees is always extremely high, and each PATY nominee candidate displays a strong commitment to their work and this industry."

The winner will take home more than \$10,000 in prizes including cash, a training package, educational opportunities and



other rewards.

The national PATY finalists include:

- Joshua Edye, Erindale Pharmacy, ACT
- James Brown, Blaxland Day and Night Pharmacy, NSW
- Ben King, Alice Springs Pharmacy, NT
- Tori McRae-Field, Direct Chemist Outlet Torrensville, SA
- Emma Smallbone, Zammit Street Pharmacy, Qld
- Kenya Broad, Penguin Pharmacy, TAS
- Cody Marshall, United Chemists Wodonga, Vic
- Jaclyn Jensen, Wizard Pharmacy Rossmoyne, WA

Guild Update

'Bigger and better'

THE pharmacy profession has demonstrated its expertise, strength, courage and dedication to care to the highest level during the COVID-19 crisis, the President of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), Dominique Jordan, has said.

Mr Jordan said the pandemic had emphasised the power of sharing and solidarity, and that acting as "one pharmacy" he was confident the profession would emerge from the pandemic "bigger and better".

However, he said the profession must now think ahead and complement the positive recognition it had received with evidence that could be used in discussions with governments after the crisis to enhance pharmacy practice.

FIP had started collecting evidence through surveys to capture the pharmaceutical response to, and impact of COVID-19 for this purpose and Mr Jordan urged the profession to contribute to them.

He added that after this pandemic, pharmacists would be needed more than ever to prevent ill health and ensure patient safety.

Read more **HERE**.



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