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## Join Sigma family

SIGMA Healthcare is offering pharmacy owners access to connected solutions to support their communities, through its six banner groups.

The company aims to provide flexibility and choice to ensure owners find the right retail services and commercial fit for their business, and ensuring they have access to trusted industry experts.

See **page four** for more.

## Guild wants to tackle COVAX issues

PHARMACY owners are keen to get on the front foot to tackle logistics issues currently plaguing the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) through general practices, before they join the national campaign.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, told *Pharmacy Daily* that the organisation was concerned about reports from GPs that there have been errors with vaccine deliveries, including issues around cold chain.

Under the Federal Government's rollout plan, DHL had been granted the distribution rights for the Pfizer/Bio NTech vaccine, while Linfox has been appointed to ship the AstraZeneca/Oxford University vaccine, which community pharmacists will administer.

Both Twomey and his predecessor as Guild National President, George Tambassies, have expressed a desire for the Government to consider recruiting Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers with a history of successful cold chain management and delivering to community pharmacies, to support distribution efforts (*PD* 16 Mar).

"We are worried that there have



been errors with deliveries to GPs," Twomey said.

"We have reached out to Linfox and they haven't returned our calls... we want to be proactive [in addressing distribution issues]."

Twomey noted that community pharmacies are unlikely to be providing COVAX until Jun, following delays in getting expression of interest submissions approved by the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA).

Pharmacies had originally been expected to hear if they had been successful in their application to become administration sites for COVAX on 19 Mar, however the PPA

is now due to provide an update on 12 Apr.

"Hopefully we'll have greater clarity then," Twomey said.

"The next logical step is to activate community pharmacies to ensure we do have that widespread access.

"Most Australians, in fact 97% of Australians, live within 2.5 km of a community pharmacy.

"Pharmacists manage supply chain logistics of medicines for a living.

"That's what we do, and we can do it better than any other healthcare provider because we do it day in and day out, and that includes cold chain logistics."

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## RASMAL changes

CONSULTATION processes relating to proposed changes to Required Advisory Statements for Medicine Labels (RASMAL) for a number of OTC medicines will close on 18 May.

## Today's issue of *PD*

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

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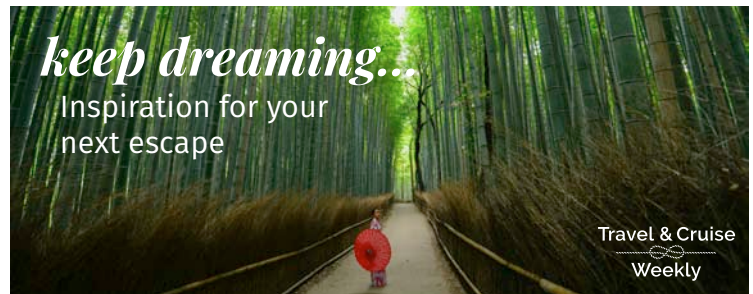
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## Guild Update

### "Why I love rural pharmacy"

**THE** "Why I Love Rural Pharmacy" video competition is back and is your opportunity to detail the challenges, the changes, the successes and the impacts that you and your communities have experienced over the past year. You are invited to submit a 30-45 second video about how you have introduced change into your practise, and practice, and reflect upon how you used to practise and how you have adapted your practice.

In keeping with the theme, Back to the Future, be sure to include this year's signature item, a skateboard, to win bonus points, and for double bonus points, a hoverboard. Please use these items safely and wisely.

Awards for Best Video and People's Choice will be announced on Thursday, 20 May in the Rural Pharmacy Forum at APP2021. The Best Video winner will receive full registration to APP2022 and the People's Choice winner will receive Guild Digital website build credit of \$300.

Submit your videos to [CPRIA.Network@guild.org.au](mailto:CPRIA.Network@guild.org.au) by Tuesday, 27 April. For more information, and T&Cs visit: [Rural Pharmacy Video Competition](#).

## Mandatory notifications now a must

**PHARMACISTS** in NSW who form the reasonable belief that a fellow health practitioner's behaviour represents a risk to patients are obliged to inform the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)*.

In its latest newsletter, the Pharmacy Council of NSW noted that "health practitioners are traditionally reluctant to make mandatory notifications for various reasons".

"These include a fear of becoming a part of a drawn out legal process or a perception that they are 'dobbing in' their peers or fellow health practitioners," the Council said.

"It can be a challenging dilemma. "However, health practitioners are often well placed to identify other colleagues who pose a risk to patients."

The Council noted that notifiable conduct included practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs, sexual misconduct in the practice of the profession, placing the public at substantial harm because of an impairment, or placing the public at risk because of a

significant departure from accepted professional standards.

The Council highlighted a case where a pharmacist reported a medical practitioner who had attempted to self-prescribe diazepam.

"The medical practitioner had used a family member's name on the prescription, and as the pharmacist asked questions about the prescription and the patient's history, the medical practitioner's behaviour alerted suspicion, prompting the pharmacist to check the AHPRA register," the Council said.

"They subsequently discovered there were conditions on this medical practitioner's registration which did not allow them to prescribe this medication.

"Following this, a mandatory notification was made.

"The pharmacist was initially reluctant to make the notification due to a perception that they would become further involved in the matter.

"However, discussion with another colleague helped to dispel that concern.

"Most of the time a mandatory notification does not require



the practitioner making the notification to provide any further correspondence to the regulatory authority, but for more serious matters, further information may be sought.

"In this case, the medical practitioner had breached conditions on their registration.

"They had a history of drug-seeking behaviour and had obtained previous supplies of diazepam in this manner.

"Had this pharmacist chosen not to make the notification, it is likely that the medical practitioner's behaviour would have continued unabated."

### Samimi joins NSW Council

**PHARMACY** Guild of Australia NSW Branch Committee member, Rick Samimi, has been appointed as a pharmacist practitioner member of the Pharmacy Council of NSW.

Samimi has previously advocated for greater cooperation between the Guild and Council (*PD* 10 Feb).

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## Dispensary Corner

**USUALLY** when it comes to plush toys they are happy, smiley creatures. However, the latest cuddly offering being sold by US-based company, Giant Microbes, represents something a little more sinister - the infamous spiked protein of the COVID-19 virus. The COVID-19 ball (pictured) is just one of a number of health issues to be given a plush look, with the company also offering soft irritable bowel syndrome, chlamydia and hemorrhoid toys. Cute and cuddly as they may be, Dispensary Corner is wondering if the COVID-19 toy sends the wrong message about the virus which has killed more than 2.85 million people.



## APP moves to cut risks

**ORGANISERS** of the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) are moving to ensure delegates will not be left out of pocket if travel arrangements unexpectedly change due to COVID-19.

Following the implementation of temporary border closures between South Australia and the Greater Brisbane area last week, APP Convenor and former Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Kos Sclavos, said steps had been taken to ensure there was no risk to delegates' registration fees, in the event that further cases prevent delegates from travelling to the event on the Gold Coast next month.

"We've made changes this year to protect all those who have registered by making sure attendees have options if border control measures or government restrictions prevent a delegate from attending," he said.

"In these circumstances, delegates will have a few options, including the ability to access sessions online while receiving a 50% refund on registration, a full 100% refund, or registration transfer to another delegate at no cost.



"Attendees can also take advantage of the Federal Government's tourism support package, which includes half-price domestic travel to the Gold Coast."

Sclavos added that organisers have implemented plans to ensure the event itself is COVID-Safe.

"We've got airport-style self check-in for the event, where attendees book a time to get their name badge pass," he said.

"We are providing as much space as possible for attendees to enjoy the sessions... we'll have additional spaces to which sessions are livestreamed so everyone is comfortable, and no one misses out on the crucial educational content that APP provides."

## Pharmacy siege

**WESTERN** Australian police used beanbag ammunition to subdue a 29-year-old man who laid siege to a Perth pharmacy last week.

The four-hour-long stand-off started when Cheyenne Stephen Landless entered the Pharmacy 777 store in Applecross at 4.30pm on Thursday claiming to have a gun.

Tactical response officers forced the closure of parts of the Canning Highway, as they surrounded the building, before storming the pharmacy at 8.40pm and arresting Landless.

ABC News reported that there were no injuries during the hold-up, with customers and pharmacy staff being released from the store earlier.

Landless had been charged with armed robbery, acts creating false apprehension as to the existence of threats or danger, and being armed in a way that may cause fear.

In a post on Facebook the pharmacy's owners praised their "wonderful staff" adding, "we feel incredibly grateful to be part of such a supportive community".

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