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SA pharmacists gain access to RTPM

PHARMACISTS and doctors in South Australia will be able to combat prescription medication abuse with the launch of the State's real-time prescription monitoring (RTPM) system, ScriptCheckSA.

Announcing the launch of the system - developed by FredIT Group (**PD** 09 Jul 2020) - SA Health Minister, Stephen Wade, said ScriptCheckSA would enable pharmacists to review a patient's history and use of controlled medicines when considering whether to dispense drugs of dependence.

The medications which will be recorded include any Schedule 8 poison, benzodiazepines, medications containing codeine, gabapentin, pregabalin, quetiapine, tramadol, zolpidem and zopiclone.

"Prescription drug dependence and misuse are a major public health concern," Wade said.

"Nationwide, the supply of prescription medicines is increasing, as is the rate of

overdose and accidental death.

"ScriptCheckSA will expose inappropriate use of high-risk medications and reduce 'doctor shopping' - visiting several different doctors to get the same prescription for a controlled medicine.

"We want to ensure that patients who genuinely need access to prescription medicines can still access them, but also identify a person's potentially harmful use of monitored drugs during a patient consultation.

"ScriptCheckSA gives doctors and pharmacists reassurance that they are making safer clinical decisions before a prescription for a monitored drug is written or dispensed.

"This is not about limiting people's access to their medication, but identifying those who are abusing high-risk prescription medication, and minimising the risk of addiction, overdose and death.

"All states and territories in



Australia have agreed to implement national real-time prescription monitoring as part of the solution to help save lives and reduce harm in the community.

"South Australia is now the second state to give prescribers and pharmacists the power to tackle this issue head on."

Use of ScriptCheckSA will initially be voluntary, however SA Health has said it is expected to become mandatory for prescribers and pharmacists in 2022.

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus full pages from:

- EzyMed
- Sigma Healthcare

Amcal advantage

SIGMA Healthcare is offering pharmacy owners a turn-key solution to transform their store into a destination for expert advice and superior service with its Amcal banner.

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Kelly backs AZ COVAX safety

AUSTRALIA'S Chief Medical Officer, Paul Kelly, believes AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine (COVAX) is "very safe", as British regulators moved to limit its use in people under 30 years old, due to growing concerns that the jab could increase the risk of rare clotting issues.

Kelly said both the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation will meet today to provide advice ahead of tomorrow's National Cabinet meeting.

Pacific donations

LIFEBLOOD is appealing for people of Pacific Island, Maori and Filipino heritage to help boost stocks of a rare blood type urgently needed by three patients.

Lifeblood Medical Director, Dr James Daly, said current stocks of the rare blood type have been exhausted, while the patients are likely to require multiple donations over the coming months.

Access key for flu jab

CONVENIENCE is the main factor behind patients' deciding to go to a pharmacy for an influenza vaccine, research from the University of NSW reveals.

Based on an online survey of 745 Australians who reported receiving a flu vaccine in 2019, 13% got the jab in a pharmacy, with 52% of those reporting that the convenience of getting to the pharmacy was the main reason behind their decision.

Cost was the second biggest factor driving patients to pharmacies or other vaccination sites, with 26.3% saying "the vaccine was cheap at this provider", while 5.3% said their employer was willing to reimburse them.

The third biggest reason for people turning to pharmacies to get the flu jab was that they "needed to have the vaccination done quickly" (12.6%).

The survey found that 73% of respondents were vaccinated at a medical centre, with a further 14% receiving a jab through a workplace clinic.

The authors noted that the proportion of patients receiving the flu jab for the first time in a pharmacy was marginally higher than in medical settings, however,



they said the difference across all sites was not statistically significant.

"Regardless of whether pharmacy vaccination significantly impacts vaccine coverage, it may make it faster, cheaper and easier to get vaccinated," they said.

"Several participants stated that they were vaccinated in a pharmacy because they needed it done quickly due to travel or surgery, and they could get it done quicker in a pharmacy than at their doctor's office.

"Other surveys in Australia and abroad have found both cost and convenience to be common reasons for getting the influenza vaccine in pharmacy."

The study was published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.



Dispensary Corner

RESIDENTS of Ann Arbor, Michigan, are set to show their love for local pharmacy workers this Fri night with a virtual bingo night hosted by drag act, Boylesque Michigan.

The event aims to raise funds to give pharmacy staff gift cards in recognition of their efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and will feature three rounds of bingo alongside a number of performances from the troupe.

Local website, Click On Detroit, noted the show is "recommended for attendees 18-years-old and above".

For Dispensary Corner readers looking to support the event, tickets are available through [Eventbrite](#) with the show starting at 10am (AEST) on Sat.



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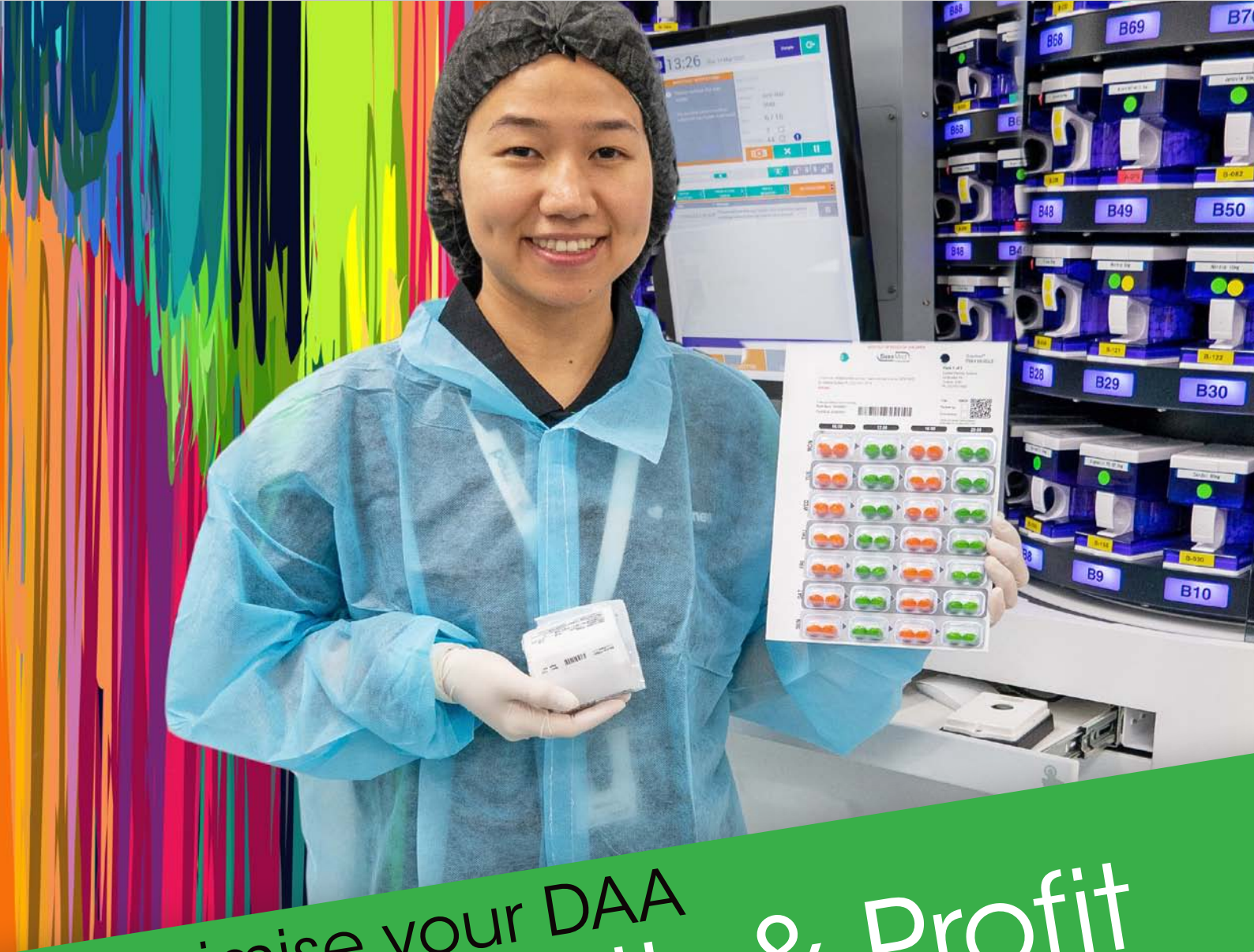
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