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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus a full page from **Storbie**.

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Pharmacy POC testing next step

COMMUNITY pharmacies are set to play a role in boosting access to COVID-19 testing through the use of rapid antigen test kits, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, believes.

Speaking during the Guild's COVID-19 vaccination update last Wed, Twomey described the rollout of point-of-care (POC) diagnostics as the next step for pharmacy.

"There has been a lot of talk about vaccinations, but the other two important elements for us to try to transition away from this crisis state to living with the virus is making it easier for Australians to be diagnosed with COVID-19, and also making it easier for Australians to be treated," he said.

"We've been spending all our energies and efforts on ensuring that all vaccines are available to all Australians through all pharmacies, and we've made in-roads on that... but POC diagnostics is the next part that we need to focus on.

"People should not have to go to a hospital, or drive-thru clinic, people should be able to access COVID-19 testing through their



local community pharmacy.

"This is happening overseas... and it will be happening in Australia.

"The issue we have here is not an availability of these - there are 45 POC diagnostic tests for COVID-19 on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

"The issues that we are working on, in making POC diagnostics available in all of your pharmacies are twofold.

"The first is getting it paid for by the Commonwealth Government.

"The second one is getting it acknowledged by State and



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Territory officials... to get some form of national consistency."

Twomey stressed the rapid antigen tests were "safe and proven".

"They are very quick - within 15 to 30 minutes - and as I've said are being used in many other states and territories... in fact we have already had trials in Queensland and South Australia, so not only is this not a world first, it's already not an Australian first," he said.



We're coming to the Northern Territory

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DATE
Wednesday 18th August 2021

TIME
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PLACE
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Dispensary Corner

NOT quite an athlete but perhaps a medical curiosity, a woman from Connecticut in the USA has set a world record of a different kind after being named as having the "world's largest mouth gape (female)".

The Guinness World Records accolade was awarded to Samantha Ramsdell, whose large mouth has already been garnering her viral fame on the TikTok social media site.

The 31-year-old told Guinness that as a child she had been teased for her "big bass mouth" but now is making the most of it, through online feats such as fitting "four single-stacked cheeseburgers and an entire large sized French fry box" in.

The official confirmation of the world record followed a visit by a Guinness adjudicator to Ramsdell's dentist, who used digital calipers to make a formal measurement.

The special feature is also appropriate because she works as a comedian - a profession where a big mouth is probably a great advantage.

"My mouth has set me apart from the other millions of comedians, singers and all these other creators...it's really really cool," she said.



COVAX fees won't keep lights on

PAYING community pharmacies \$16 to administer COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) will not keep the lights on, one Sydney-based pharmacy assistant (PA) warns.

In a letter to Australian Labor Party leader, Anthony Albanese, and pharmacist-turned-MP, Emma McBride, 25-year-old PA, Eleanor Turnbull, noted that pharmacies were "doing the heavy lifting" to boost vaccination uptake, while making a loss.

"Our pharmacy was excited to finally offer the AstraZeneca vaccine and received our first batch (600 doses), last Thu," Turnbull said.

"We began within the hour, posting on community pages and contacting people directly.

"I was amazed and heartened at the turnout, especially from young people.

"We've vaccinated over 100 people in three and a half days.

"The issue is, we will struggle to afford to continue.

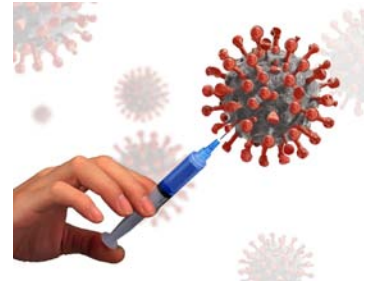
"The process of getting the patient to fill in the form, enter the details on the database and the vaccination itself takes roughly 10 minutes then we have to monitor the patient for 15 minutes.

"We have to have at least one extra staff member, and our longstanding customers don't receive the usual level of service they are used to so I'm worried we will lose business.

"With at least 15-20 minutes spent on each patient and potentially losing other regular business, \$16 per dose potentially won't even cover the wages.

"We've worked extended hours and opened on Sunday (usually closed on Sunday) to meet demand, but this will have been at a loss and my boss won't even pay himself.

"We receive \$26 when the patient returns for their second dose but



that doesn't help us right now.

"We are essentially making a loss, yet working harder than we've ever worked.

"We are all so happy and committed to something as important as these vaccinations.

"I'm worried we can't continue, however, \$16 for a 20-minute service won't keep the lights on.

"If the government is serious about vaccine accessibility then pharmacists have to at least break even and be able to pay themselves and their staff."

Get COVAX orders in by COB today

ALL 3,500 pharmacies that have been approved by the Commonwealth Government to administer COVID-19 vaccination services will be eligible to commence vaccine services this week (**PD** breaking news Fri).

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, told **Pharmacy Daily**, that pharmacies that place orders by close of business (COB) today will be stocked to commence administering vaccines by the weekend.

Twomey added that the "hard window" for participation in the COVAX program by QCPP approved pharmacies that have previously not applied to be



involved, of midnight on Thu 29 Jul has been lifted.

"We were able, with the Federal Government, to keep it open so people can continue to apply," he said.

"They've just missed the accelerated window, that's all it is... it doesn't mean they've missed the boat forever.

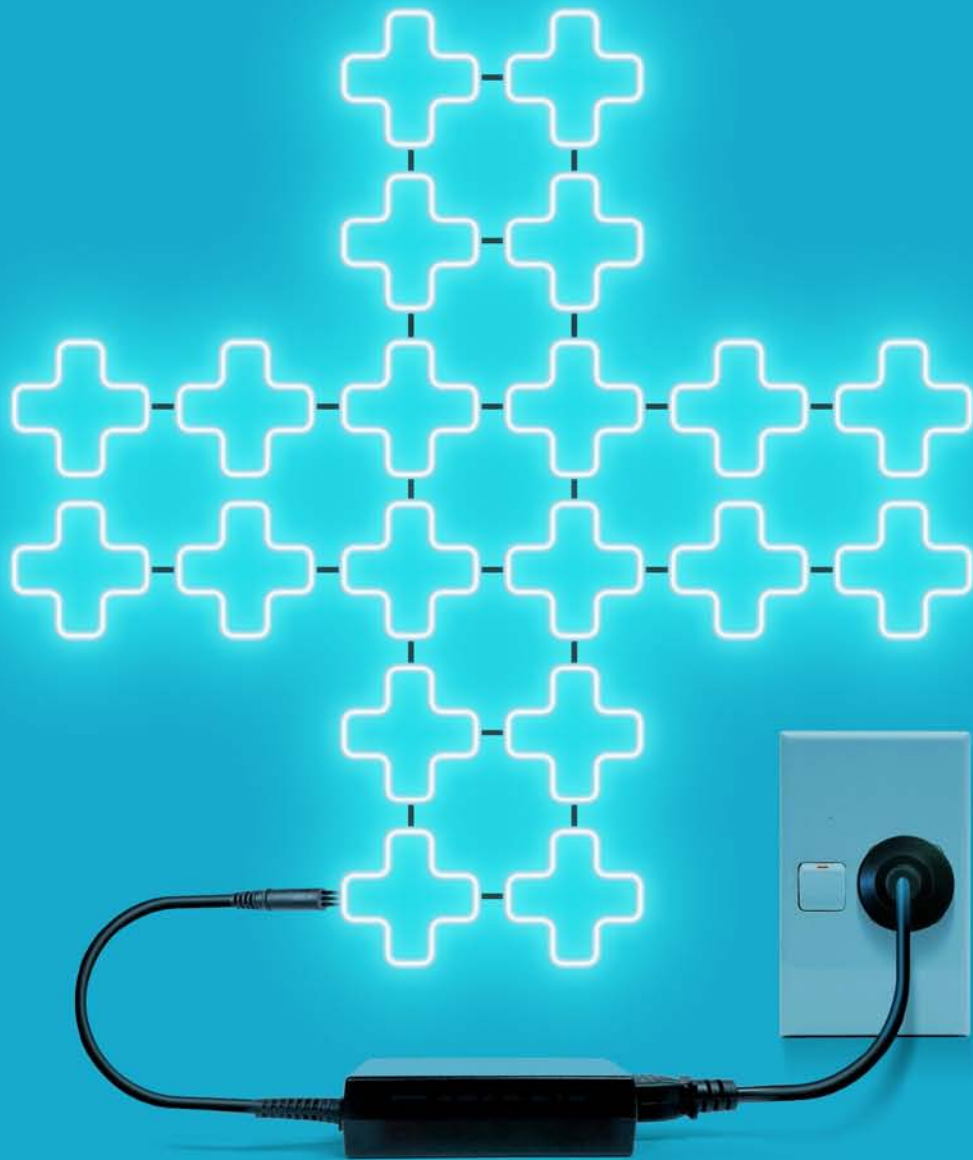
"We encourage all pharmacies that haven't yet applied to apply."

New pill option

THE introduction of a new generation progestogen-only contraceptives pill, Slinda (drospirenone 4mg) is offering a new option for women, sexual health physician and University of NSW School of Women's and Children's Health, Dr Terri Foran, believes.

Foran said the medication removed concerns of rare clotting risks associated with estrogen products, noting that issues related to COVID-19 vaccine side-effects had prompted some women to rethink their contraceptive medication.

Slinda is currently available via private prescription.



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