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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

PDL booster alert

PHARMACISTS are being urged not to be "rushed or bullied into providing [COVID-19 booster] vaccinations outside approved schedules and protocols".

In a practice alert issued by indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL), pharmacists have been told to have consistent processes and well-informed, supportive staff on duty to help minimise areas of risk when providing immunisation services.

The insurer advised pharmacists to check the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) before administering shots to ensure patients' eligibility for the booster shots.

Wesfarmers pledges capital support

PRICELINE Pharmacy franchisees will be able to access a fresh source of capital, if Wesfarmers is successful in its bid to acquire Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API), the retail giant's Managing Director, Rob Scott, says.

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily*, after announcing Wesfarmers' commitment to safeguarding Priceline Sister Club data from its Flybuys loyalty program (PD 15 Dec), Scott said the company was "committed to support the growth of pharmacies through the API investment".

"We recognise that for API to be successful, it must offer a really strong proposition through the Community Service Obligation (CSO) distribution capability to community pharmacies, and also it must offer a strong proposition for Priceline pharmacists to help them compete in what is a very competitive market," he said.

"Where we can provide value [to Priceline franchisees] is we

can provide capital [and] we can provide greater technology support.

"Wesfarmers is well known to have a long-term approach to investment, so we're not just focused on making a quick return, we're prepared to invest for the long-term - particularly with Priceline pharmacies.

"Priceline pharmacists are looking to grow their businesses, not just with prescriptions, but with the front of store business where they are up against fierce competition from the supermarkets and other groups like Chemist Warehouse.

"We believe that with our capital and our capability, we can support Priceline pharmacists to be more successful."

As the largest shareholder in API, with a 19.3% stake, Scott said the company would seek to block rival bidder, Woolworths' efforts to take control of the wholesaler and its prized Sister Club loyalty scheme.

"Woolworths really needs to



consider an alternative proposal if it is serious in moving this forward," he said.

"We are the largest shareholder in API at the moment, and the future success of API depends on the ongoing support and success of Priceline franchisees and community pharmacists.

"So as a shareholder in API, we will be prioritising the rights and the growth of community pharmacists and Priceline franchisees ahead of the supermarkets, that is the commitment that we're making."

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Dispensary Corner

PHARMACISTS bracing for tantrums, hissy-fits and rage as parents present their children for COVID-19 vaccines from 10 Jan 2022, may want to follow techniques used by their US peers.

Philadelphia-based pharmacy owner, Mayank Amin, hosted a vaccine clinic in a local school last month, where children were given colour-coded wristbands based on what their parents said about their risk of each kid chucking a tanty, with "yellers" directed to a "VIP lounge".

Amin's clinic had live music and jugglers on hand to distract nervous kids, while immunisers wore superhero capes, with a magician on hand to entertain them during their post-job observation period.



Aged care needs pharmacists: PSA

EMBEDDING pharmacists in aged care facilities is critical for improving medicines safety, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), believes.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, has called on the Federal Government to address concerns about inappropriate medicine use highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

"Every day that a pharmacist is not working alongside aged care staff in caring for older Australians is a day residents are in danger from medication harm," he said.

"It is crucial that service providers are allowed the flexibility to determine how they secure pharmacist services."

"It can't be a one size fits all approach as every facility is different."

MDR sees booster bump

BOOKINGS for COVID-19 booster vaccines through community pharmacies have shot up by more than 400% in the last week, medtech firm, MedAdvisor (MDR) reveals.

MDR CEO, Rob Read, said that the company has seen a rapid uptake of the boosters through its pharmacy appointment booking system in recent weeks, with rising case numbers in NSW and Victoria fuelling demand.

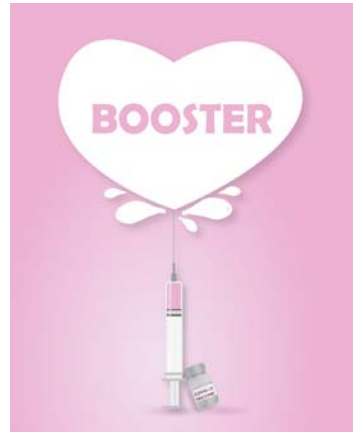
"Since Nov, MDR's pharmacy network has delivered more than 25,000 boosters, with numbers increasing week-on-week," he said.

"During the past week, we have witnessed a fourfold increase in booster bookings alone.

"Pharmacy is playing a critical role in vaccination, given how proximate pharmacies are to most of the population.

"Pharmacies are accessible and when everything is closed during the holidays, they'll remain open.

"Even if you're travelling and



away from your regular GP, you can walk-in to your nearest pharmacy and receive a booster, or 'third dose'.

"Patients are reporting that they feel very comfortable getting their jabs in pharmacy settings and that they feel supported when chatting with pharmacists about any concerns they might have."

Read said that more than two million bookings for COVID-19 vaccinations have been made through MDR's platform to date, with more than 1.75 million doses having been administered through community pharmacies using the company's software.

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