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## Pharmacy Guild launches COVAX tool

**THE** Australian College of Pharmacy (ACP) has partnered with the Qld branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to develop a new nationwide “vaccination eligibility tool,” giving Australians real-time information on when they may be able to access their COVID-19 immunisation.

The [getmycovidvax.com.au](http://getmycovidvax.com.au) website is a “simple digital tool where consumers answer a series of questions and are informed about in which phase of the Federal Government’s COVID-19 National Vaccination rollout they may be able to receive their vaccine,” according to ACP’s newly appointed CEO, Dimitri Kopanakis (**PD** 25 Feb).

Kopanakis said the tool had been created to raise community awareness about the various phases of the rollout, and to ensure greater community confidence.

“Pharmacists work each and every day supporting their local communities,” he said.

“This eligibility tool is yet another way of educating the community, and supporting pharmacists, by providing Australians with clear and concise information.”

The tool is free of charge, and includes a “push” feature which will notify Australians of any changes to their eligibility or the rollout schedule as well as a reminder of when their phase commences.

“Importantly, once Phase 2A commences the tool will also assist in providing information to patients on obtaining their vaccination, including how to make an appointment,” Kopanakis noted.

Trent Twomey, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Qld Branch President, said he was pleased to partner with the ACP in the creation of the tool.

“Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, community pharmacies have been at the forefront supporting Australian patients.

“As we move forward, we’ll continue to be on the frontline

and join the nationwide effort to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to millions of Australians from phase 2A of the rollout,” Twomey said.

He noted that for several years community pharmacies had been “safely and intimately involved” in the rollout of critical vaccination programs, with the COVID-19 campaign the most important health initiative of our generation.

“Australia is one of the most decentralised nations in the world, which is why the Federal and State Governments should be commended for ensuring that as primary healthcare providers, community pharmacies are part of the vaccination rollout,” he added.

“Not all Australians living in regional and remote areas may have access to a GP to get access to vaccinations, which is why it is so critical that all primary healthcare professionals are involved and access to the COVID-19 vaccine is as broad as possible.”

Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news.

### Career podcast

**RAVEN'S** Recruitment has launched the eighth episode of its popular *Your Pharmacy Career* podcast.

This week's instalment features a chat with Mahek Shah, a passionate third year Monash Pharmacy student, who is also the 2021 President of the Victorian Pharmacy Student Association.

Shah also sits on the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's early career pharmacist working group, and in the podcast shares her journey as a student leader and what she has gained from stepping out of her comfort zone - listen on any podcast app or at [ravensrecruitment.com.au](http://ravensrecruitment.com.au).

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## Blackmores \$19m

**BLACKMORES** this week reported its results for the six months to 31 Dec 2020, with a 4% increase in statutory net profit after tax of \$18.9 million.

The company will pay a 29c per share interim dividend, after receiving \$10.4 million in COVID-19 JobKeeper assistance - \$2.4 million of which has now been repaid.

Revenue rose 4% to \$302 million, with CEO Alastair Symington saying the period reflected "necessary steps to hit important turnaround milestones...and positive strides towards simplifying our operating model in line with our new strategic direction".

Sales in Australia and NZ were down 10% to \$148 million, impacted by market contraction with fewer international travellers and students as well as rolling lockdowns resulting in reduced foot traffic in local retail.

## New FIP toolkit

**THE** International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has released a new medicines reconciliation toolkit, as the latest resource aiming to boost patient safety.

The World Health Organization has listed transitions of care as one of three priority areas that need effective action to protect patients, with FIP CEO Catherine Duggan saying "medicines reconciliation should be practised in every healthcare setting".

The full toolkit is available for download at [fip.org](http://fip.org).

# MDR targets pharmacy expansion

**DIGITAL** medication management provider, MedAdvisor (MDR), is aiming to expand its pharmacy network and drive revenue growth through health programs in the coming months.

The Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) listed business reported a 191% jump in revenue for the first half of the 2021 financial year to \$12.9 million, with gross profits up 90% year-on-year.

The company revealed its Australian health programs continued to show strong momentum, climbing 56% in the six months to 31 Dec 2020, to \$748,000, compared with the prior corresponding period (\$479,000).

MDR said its US programs had been "growing steadily" before the company completed its acquisition of Adheris six weeks before the end of H1 FY21, which created "immediate scale in the US".

"Total revenue for Australian operations was up 13% for H1 FY21, compared to H1 FY20, largely through pharmacy network growth, which was up to more than 3,600, representing approximately 64% of the pharmacy market," MDR said.

"As MDR continues to grow its



network and reach, the opportunity to generate an increasing amount of revenue from patients within the network and through health programs will be a key growth driver for future periods.

"Health programs revenue was up 56% on the prior corresponding period, as patient volumes grow and more sponsors are attracted to the scale of MDR.

"Our ability to improve adherence and persistence to medication is a significant attraction to pharmaceutical companies."

MDR also reported the number of digitally connected patients

in Australia was up 41% on Q2 FY20, to 1.8 million, while patient app orders and items per order were up by close to 52% and 56% respectively year-on-year for Q2 FY21 compared with the prior corresponding period.

The company noted that it was the first to market with a conformant patient app for electronic prescribing, which was introduced in H1 FY21.

"The workflows make it extremely easy for patients to handle multiple scripts whilst providing pharmacy with a more efficient workflow than with paper scripts," the firm said.

## Walgreens test

**US PHARMACY** behemoth Walgreens has announced an agreement to sell Pixel by Labcorp COVID-19 PCR Test Home Collection Kits over the counter in up to 6,000 stores.

The kit will be Walgreens' first OTC COVID-19 testing option, with the aim of addressing the need in stores that do not currently have testing available on-site.



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## Dispensary Corner

**ANOTHER** brilliant breakthrough in US medical thinking was recorded this week, when a 105-year-old COVID-19 survivor in New Jersey attributed her longevity to daily consumption of gin-soaked raisins.

Lucia DeClerck had just received her second coronavirus vaccine injection when diagnosed with COVID-19 about a month ago, but according to the administrator of her nursing home in Little Egg Harbor, she showed few symptoms and was back in her room within a couple of weeks.

While paying tribute to the jab's protective effects against coronavirus, DeClerck also gave some other health tips, including avoiding junk food, consistent prayer and using baking soda to brush your teeth.

And on top of that, comes the raisins. "Fill a jar...nine raisins a day, after it sits for nine days," she told the *New York Post*.

**PIZZA** is a better choice for breakfast than most cereals, according to an American nutritionist.

Chelsea Amer has conducted an analysis of the alternatives, and said the high sugar content in most breakfast cereals provides a burst of energy, but then often results in a "sugar crash" later in the day.

She noted that a bowl of cereal with milk contains nearly the same amount of kilojoules as an average slice of pizza, while the higher protein content of each slice means those who consume it are less likely to snack later on.

## \$53k import fine

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has issued four infringement notices totalling \$53,280 to Sydney-based Haimex International Pty Ltd for the "alleged unlawful importation of infrared thermometers, rigid strapping tapes and iodine prep pads".

The firm allegedly brought in the items despite them not being included in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

## FDA warms up on Pfizer vax

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has overnight announced approval for undiluted frozen vials of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to be transported and stored at conventional temperatures commonly found in pharmaceutical freezers for a period of up to two weeks.

The move, which was flagged earlier this week (*PD* 22 Feb), will potentially facilitate a faster rollout of the vaccine which was previously required to be stored at ultra-low temperatures of between -60°C and -80°C.

**MEANWHILE** the FDA also looks set to approve a third COVID-19 vaccination within days, after finding that the single-shot Johnson & Johnson jab is safe and effective.

If given the green light, the company has agreed to provide the USA with 100 million doses by the end of Jun, while 500 million doses have been ordered under the COVAX scheme to supply poorer nations with the shot.

## Techs cut dispensing errors

**NEW** research showcased in the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia's *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research* has found that having trained technicians perform final verification of dispensing processes significantly reduced the risk of hospital pharmacy dispensing errors.

The systematic review *Interventions to decrease the incidence of dispensing errors in hospital pharmacy* was conducted by pharmacists from Alfred Health and Monash Pharmacy, and found that interventions reduced the overall rate of dispensing errors by almost 50%.

While pharmacy technician verifications were the most effective intervention, other studies covered looked at the impact of technology such as barcode scanning, pharmacy carousels and robotic dispensing machines.

After analysing studies from Australia, France, Spain, Taiwan, the UK and the USA, the authors of the report concluded that "the final verification step of the dispensing process is a key strategy for preventing errors before a dispensed medication reaches the patient".

Contributors to dispensing



errors included poor design of dispensaries, lack of support for a no-blame culture around error identification, and inadequate staff training and experience.

There was also increased concern around errors involving look-alike-sound-alike (LASA) medication names and packaging, which had become increasingly noticeable with the advent of generics.

The study's conclusions are available at [onlinelibrary.wiley.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com).

The Feb 2021 issue of *JPPR* is available free to SHPA members, and also features editorials from the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) covering recommendations from the organisation's Practice Advancement Initiative 2030.

## Win an Evolt 360 package

This week Pharmacy Daily & Evolt are giving away an Evolt 360 Body Composition package valued at \$2500 - a high tech body composition platform that is proven to increase profitability, drive foot traffic, whilst engaging with the local community and establishing brand loyalty. To learn more click [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) to enter & to see last weeks winner.



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