

NEW



Ferro-Max C™

For higher iron absorption.

Available from Symbion, Sigma and API.

Use only as directed. Consult your healthcare professional if symptoms persist.



Location Rules stop pharmacy deserts

RESEARCH showing ‘pharmacy deserts’ across disadvantaged parts of Los Angeles County highlight the benefits of Australia’s Pharmacy Location Rules, a spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

The study conducted by the University of California, Irvine (UCI) found that areas lacking pharmacy access were often characterised by denser populations, larger numbers of Latino and African-American residents, higher rates of crime, lower levels of home and car ownership, and greater poverty.

UCI Health Sciences Assistant Clinical Professor of Clinical Pharmacy Practice, Cheryl Wisseh, said these social determinants of health compound the negative effects of pharmacy shortage through competing needs.

“For example, some residents living below the poverty line may choose to forgo picking up their medications so that they can pay for food, rent and other necessities,” she said.

Wisseh added that the prevalence of pharmacy deserts in underprivileged areas meant residents had less access to



health screening, vaccination and medication management services, than those living in areas where pharmacies were more accessible.

“Residents in Los Angeles County pharmacy deserts might benefit greatly from equitable, innovative, community-based interventions that increase access to medications, pharmacy services and pharmacists,” she said.

Wisseh suggested that authorities in the area could look to add pharmacists to local health clinics and other primary care settings to boost access to pharmacy services in these areas.

Responding to questions from **Pharmacy Daily**, a Guild spokesperson said the Pharmacy Location Rules in Australia had proven effective to preventing the emergence of pharmacy deserts in lower socioeconomic areas.

“The beneficial and equitable distribution of 5,800 community pharmacies across Australia is not an accident of the market,” the spokesperson said.

“It is a direct result of the Pharmacy Location Rules.”

The research was published in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*.

Today’s issue of **PD**

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news, plus a full page from **Willach**.

Rethinking your dispensary

EMBRACING dispensary technology including robotics can help free up pharmacists time to focus on supporting the healthcare needs of their patients, pharmacy solutions provider Willach believes.

Robots, including Willach’s Consis, can help pharmacists in delivering fast and accurate dispensing, to support medicines safety.

See **page three** for more information.

TGA recall

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has announced a recall of all batches of Tenofovir Disoproxil Emtricitabine Mylan 300/200 tablets due to the potential for broken/split tablets.

CLICK HERE for more.

PBS Safety Net claim form changes

SERVICES Australia is replacing the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Safety Net claim for payment form pads, as it shifts to a fillable PDF.

In an announcement made earlier this week the Federal Government agency said it was no longer supplying the pads as part of the annual PBS Safety Net kits, noting the new PBS Safety Net claim or payment form (PB241) is now available through its website.

As part of a transition process to the new system, Services Australia will continue to process claims submitted using the pads, which can still be obtained through the Camerons Group Online Ordering Portal until all stock is exhausted.

Under the new system the agency will require pharmacies to retain copies of all forms submitted.

“We will only accept typed prescription order forms,” Services Australia said.

“We will return handwritten, incomplete or poor quality forms to the prescriber.”

CLICK HERE to access the PB241 form.

No increased COVID risk with ACEIs

CONCERNS that the use of angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs) and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) to manage hypertension may increase patients’ susceptibility to COVID-19 appear to be unfounded, research reveals.

Data from an international study of more than 1.3 million patients found no clinically significant increased risk of COVID-19 diagnosis or hospital admissions-related outcomes associated with the use of ACEIs or ARBs.

The authors noted that patients with cardiovascular disease and hypertension are more likely to develop severe complications from

COVID-19, adding there has been speculation that ACEIs and ARBs, which block the renin-angiotensin system might affect people’s susceptibility to the virus and worsen its severity.

“We observed no clear association of increased risk of COVID-19 diagnosis, hospital admission, or subsequent complications associated with the outpatient prevalent ACEI or ARB use,” they said.

“Our findings support recent regulatory and clinical society recommendations that patients should not halt their ACEI or ARB therapy despite previously posited mechanisms of increased COVID-19 risk”.

The research was published in *The Lancet*.

UK pharmacists 'desperate to help'

BRITAIN'S National Health Service (NHS) is moving to resolve an issue preventing pharmacist immunisers from signing up to administer COVID-19 vaccinations.

The move came after a number of pharmacists reported that they were unable to register to join the NHS England's team of COVID-19 vaccinators, as the application form did not list pharmacists among those eligible to apply.

An NHS spokesperson told *Chemist and Druggist*, that the issue had been caused by a system error, which has since been fixed.

"Community pharmacists will soon be playing an important role in local vaccination services, alongside the tens of thousands of others who have trained to deliver this vital protection," the spokesperson said.

"We are delighted that current and former pharmacy colleagues



are keen to play a role too, as vaccine supplies increase."

However, the application form has not been the only barrier preventing pharmacists from participating in the UK's vaccine rollout, with Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee Chief, Simon Dukes, telling *The Daily Telegraph* that offers to help had been met with "a de facto

silence" from the Government.

"Rather than scrabbling around trying to find retired GPs and nurses and anyone who has possibly dated skills, you've got an army of thousands of pharmacists up and down the country who administer the flu jab every winter," he said.

"We've been telling the NHS that we're ready, willing and desperate to help."



Dispensary Corner

VACCINE hesitancy is a real issue and building trust in immunisations to protect against COVID-19 will be key.

In a bid to overcome skepticism of the efficacy of the Pfizer BioNTech jab, one pro-vaccine campaigner has developed a poster to convince people to take the shot.

The simple text-only campaign urges the public to "have faith in the Pfizer vaccine".

"Don't forget they make Viagra," the poster reads. "If they can raise the dead... they can save the living."

While the poster may be convincing enough to sway some into taking the job - assuming it gets approval from the Therapeutic Goods Administration - the Dispensary Corner team believes it may be a hard-sell for those committed anti-vaxxers and COVID conspiracy theorists in the community.

Intern's aged care pen pals finally meet

PRIMARY school students in Western Australia have finally got to meet their socially-isolated pen pals after almost a year of letter-writing as part of a program developed by pharmacy intern, Tahlia Parisella.

The Geraldton-based pharmacist was inspired to launch the program by her interactions with isolated patients while delivering medications (*PD* 08 Sep 2020).

Initially Parisella said she had initially hoped to see the pen pals have "semi-regular meetups", but the COVID-19 pandemic stopped that, until this week, when the patients got to see their Bicton Primary School buddies in the flesh for the first time.



"It has been really great to get the community together to participate in such an inter-generational program like this," Parisella said.

"Social isolation has become so much more prominent because of COVID-19 and it's been really great to see them keeping in touch."

Mayne launches Microgestin in US

MAYNE Pharma Group has announced the commercial launch of its Microgestin 24 FE (norethindrone acetate and ethinyl estradiol tablets, USP, and ferrous fumarate tablets, 1mg/20mcg) in the US.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange Mayne CEO, Scott Richards, said the launch positioned the company as one of the leading suppliers of oral contraceptives in the US.

Microgestin 24 FE is the first of five anticipated US product launches from the Mayne's strategic partnership with Novast Laboratories.

Have faith in the Pfizer vaccine. Don't forget they make Viagra.

If they can raise the dead...they can save the living.



Time to rethink your dispensary set-up?

Improve your stock management

No matter what your size, the principles of profitable stock management remain the same. That is why our automation solution enables fast and precise dispensing of medicines as well as providing practical and easy software solutions, saving you time and money. Real time management reporting and integration with dispense software takes the hassle out of stock management.



-  Costs savings
-  More time to spend with your patients
-  Instant asset write-off*

For further information call the team at Willach on (03) 9429 8222.

* To find out if your business is eligible for the instant asset write-off, consult your financial adviser.