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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus a full page from Sigma Healthcare.

Minfos boosts booking system

PHARMACY dispensing software provider, Minfos, has launched a new vaccine appointment booking interface.

The platform can now be synced with Minfos Dispense, allowing patient details to be automatically pulled from the booking system into the dispensing program, removing the need to manually transfer data.

Pharmacists will be able to view upcoming appointments, receive alerts when dispensing for a future date and utilise shortcuts to make vaccination appointment management easier, the company said.

NSW activates pharmacy COVAX

LIMITED numbers of pharmacies in regional and rural parts of NSW will start administering COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) from 19 Jul as part of a pilot program, however restrictions will apply.

Announcing the move to boost accessibility to COVAX in parts of the State where access to a GP or vaccine clinic is limited "due to geography", NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said 22 community pharmacists would be able to administer the AstraZeneca vaccine exclusively to patients aged 60 years and older.

"We know that some of these communities have limited local access to GP services and having these pharmacies involved will assist with the phased rollout of the AstraZeneca vaccine to these communities," she said.

"This is a vital step to help ensure as many people in NSW as possible receive their COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible."

NSW Health said the pharmacies involved in the pilot were required to meet "certain standards", including that pharmacists "must not supply or administer the vaccine to a person who is under the age of 60, or a patient with a contraindication or precaution to vaccination".

"It is expected additional pharmacies will join the COVAX program in the future," NSW Health said.

"This also paves the way for pharmacies to further assist NSW in supporting the Commonwealth Government's rollout of COVID-19 vaccines."

The announcement follows calls from both the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) for community pharmacies to be activated to join the campaign.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, said community pharmacies were ideally



placed to support the rollout (PD breaking news yesterday).

"With pharmacists now also covered by the Government's indemnity scheme, the solution is right under the Government's nose," he said.

"Governments need a patient-centric approach to put the community first.

"Pharmacists need to be activated now, so that as more supply becomes available, they are already on board and can be fully utilised to vaccinate in pharmacies alongside vaccinations occurring as part of the general practice network and vaccination hubs."

The Emergency Locum Service (ELS) provides support to community pharmacies in rural and remote regions of Australia via direct access to pharmacist locums in emergency situations.

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MJA editor backs pharmacy vax sites

EVERY available vaccination service, including community pharmacies, should be used to roll out COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX), the editor of the Australian Medical Association's *Medical Journal of Australia*, Professor Nick Talley, believes.

Speaking on Sydney's 2GB radio this morning, Talley backed pharmacists to safely and effectively administer COVAX.

"They're equipped to do the job, and while there's been debate about the best methods for getting the vaccine rollout going, in my view every method needs to be applied that's safe and effective, so that we get people vaccinated," he said.

"I believe it's very important that every avenue is used, and as many people as possible get vaccinated as long as vaccine supplies are available."

Talley added that he was concerned about "the mixed messaging" and "alarmist language" circulating in relation to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

"The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's (ATAGI's) advice hasn't changed," he said.

"That advice was, and is, if you're under 60 and if Pfizer isn't available to you at the moment - which in fact it isn't for a significant proportion of the population - and if the benefits likely outweigh the risks - which they do - and if a person has made an informed decision and knows the risk-benefits... they can elect to have the AstraZeneca vaccine.

"Now the health advice remains [that] Pfizer's preferable, but you can elect to do this and the AstraZeneca vaccine is a very good vaccine.

"I think people can and should



be allowed to make informed decisions about their health, and that's what this is all about."

Talley's comments echoed the views of Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, who called for patients to be allowed to make informed decisions around vaccination uptake.

"Sure there is a preference for certain age groups to have certain types of vaccines, but it should be up to individual Australians, as they are going into a lockdown to choose which vaccinations they put in their bodies," he said.



Dispensary Corner

MEDICINAL cannabis is seen as one of the next big growth areas for pharmaceutical products - and not just for humans.

Auckland-based Helius Animal Health has announced the development of what is hoped to become the world's first registered CBD oils for pets.

New Zealand's recently launched Medicinal Cannabis Scheme allows for local cannabis production, with Helius MD Leila de Koster saying "CBD is highly effective for treating the likes of pain and inflammation in humans, and it's no different for animals."

"They have an endogenous cannabinoid system just like us, meaning cannabis therapeutics work in a similar way for pets."

Paul Manning, CEO of parent company Helius Therapeutics, said "to have high-quality, locally-produced therapeutic cannabis products readily available in New Zealand will be a game-changer for many Kiwi pet owners desperate to alleviate their companion's pain and suffering naturally".

The first product expected to launch is a CBD extract for osteoarthritis pain management in dogs, the company forecast.

Sign up to DDS

SIGMA Healthcare is offering pharmacy owners the opportunity to join its Discount Drug Stores (DDS) group.

The banner provides customers with "everyday value" and healthcare solutions, while having the trappings of a national brand.

See **page three** for more information.

Veterinarian dream turned to pharmacy

FROM dreaming of becoming a vet as a teenager, a chat with a pharmacist while on holidays played a part in redirecting Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Queensland Branch, Senior Consulting Team Pharmacist, Megan Tremlett's career path.

Speaking on the latest episode of the Raven's Recruitment

Your Pharmacy Career Podcast, Tremlett shared her experience of working as a pharmacist across hospital, community, consultancy and project management settings.

Tremlett also spoke about her passion for developing pathways to enable pharmacists to work to their full scope of practice.

CLICK HERE to listen now.



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EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper
Editor – Nicholas O'Donoghue
Contributors – Adam Bishop, Myles Stedman
info@pharmacydaily.com.au

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Sean Harrigan, Hoda Alzubaidi
advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

BUSINESS MANAGER

Jenny Piper
accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
 Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
 PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
 Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

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Peter.Lane@sigmahealthcare.com.au