



## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Willach
- Choice Pharmacy

## Robotic solution

**PHARMACY** solutions specialist, Willach, aims to be more than a supplier, delivering space saving systems to boost your dispensary performance. See **page four** for more.

## Choice career

**OPPORTUNITIES** are available for pharmacists to join the Choice Pharmacy brand, which offers back office mentorship for those stepping into ownership. See **page five** for more.

# WA urged to activate all pharmacies

**MOVES** to improve access to COVID-19 vaccines through 49 community pharmacies in regional and rural Western Australia is a first step, but the State Government needs to activate the full pharmacy workforce, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) WA Branch President, Dr Fei Sim, believes.

While welcoming the decision to activate pharmacies, Sim said she was concerned that "pharmacist involvement [in the campaign] is still limited".

"This is fantastic for rural residents in towns including Donnybrook, Narogin and Wickham, but with 50% of people aged over 50 years still to get their first dose, it is time to activate all approved community pharmacies in WA now," she said.

"While this is a great start, a further 463 pharmacies have been approved by the Government, but are yet to start vaccinating.

"As Australia's most accessible healthcare workforce, bringing all community pharmacists on-board will accelerate the rollout, especially in Australia's largest and most population-dispersed state.

"While WA's COVID-19 experience is the envy of the world, vaccination is the only path out of the pandemic.

"We must do everything we can to get as many Western Australians vaccinated against this terrible disease as soon as possible.

"This means activating all of our full vaccinator workforce – including pharmacists – as soon as possible."

**MEANWHILE**, a spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia welcomed plans to activate pharmacies in NSW to administer the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, announced by Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, this morning, noting the organisation was working with



the Premier's office and the Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant.

"Anything that pharmacies can do to help in the Sydney emergency is a very positive step and one which we will work closely with authorities to achieve," the spokesperson said.

Full details of the updated pharmacy activation program in NSW have yet to be confirmed, with Berejiklian revealing the State Government was working on a deal that would see pharmacists administer the vaccine to "anybody over 40".



FREE WEBINAR

## WHAT'S THE UPSIDE?

Finding the simple actions that will boost your revenue, expand your market share and ultimately help you grow your pharmacy.

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 **STORBIE**

## Pharmacy COVAX needed long-term

**GOVERNMENTS** across all Australian jurisdictions need to urgently engage community pharmacies to roll out both AstraZeneca and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX), Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch Committee Member, Rick Samimi, believes.

The former Guild NSW Branch President, told **Pharmacy Daily** that the current rollout campaign urged policymakers across the country to bring pharmacists onboard both for the current initial immunisation campaign and to administer booster shots in the future.

"Whilst it is clear there are supply issues, erratic planning of best channels of distribution of vaccines has also been a major factor, with bypassing the community pharmacy network as most obvious ...resulting in a slow immunisation rate as a result, to the point that now Governments are searching for outlets for vaccination when pharmacies remain idly waiting to be called upon," he said.

"However, more critically, it is a

major concern that there appears to be little discussion or publicly available information on future planning for 2022 and beyond when annual mass vaccination will most probably be on the cards for many years to come, considering the speed of mutation of the virus.

"We can't get to Feb or Mar next year and not have a plan in place [for long-term immunisation campaigns].

"Governments should be planning now to ensure smooth supply and provision of vaccination from pharmacies and GP surgeries ASAP this year and critically longer term in 2022 and beyond.

"It appears that our leaders seem to be focused on solving a political issue now, an initially well-managed public health issue which due to poor vaccine implementation is fast becoming a major political headache for everyone."

Samimi welcomed the NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian's announcement this morning that plans were underway to activate community pharmacies across the



state as COVAX sites.

**MEANWHILE**, Guild National President, Trent Twomey, noted that more than 1,000 regional and rural pharmacies will be actively administering COVAX by mid-Aug, across every State and Territory, with the exception of the ACT.

Speaking on *Nine News* last night, Twomey called on State and Territory leaders "to remove the ban on the remaining 3,000 pharmacies in major metropolitan areas" to enable them to administer COVAX shots.

## Grace granted for CTG scripts

**THE** Commonwealth Department of Health has moved to alleviate issues with the new arrangements for the Closing the Gap (CTG) Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Relief Program, granting a grace period to honour existing prescriptions and repeats until 30 Sep.

The move follows widespread chaos experienced by pharmacists across the country, following the implementation of changes from 01 Jul (*PD* 07 Jul).

Until the grace period is implemented, pharmacies will receive a PBS Online code 810 rejection if they try to dispense a prescription as CTG for a person who is not on the Services Australia CTG Register.

For urgent access, the prescriber should be contacted and requested to register the patient as CTG.

## PATY self-nominations close this week

**PHARMACY** assistants have until 11.59pm (AEST) on Fri to nominate themselves for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (PATY) Award.

The 2020 PATY winner, Ben King (**pictured**), from Alice Springs Pharmacy, urged his peers to "go for it" and nominate themselves for the award, which offers the chance to win \$10,000 worth of prizes.

"It's the most fun you'll have in your life," he said.

"It's really accessible, you



meet a lot of like-minded people and you get to show everyone your passion, your energy and most importantly you get to be yourself."

**CLICK HERE** to nominate now.

## TGA provides update on CPAP recall

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is advising customers with safety concerns relating to defective sound abatement foam in Philips branded CPAP, Bi-Level CPAP devices and mechanical ventilators to register their products on the company's website.

In a statement released on Fri, the TGA noted that it was aware that some patients were having difficulty contacting Philips about their devices.

"It is important that customers

register their devices on the Philips **WEBSITE**," the TGA said.

"This will help us plan an effective approach to either repair or replace them, taking into account the specific needs of various patient groups.

"The TGA is assessing safety information to ensure any proposed actions are appropriate - these may be different for different devices.

Philips has confirmed that replacing the device or replacing the foam will be done at no cost to the patient.



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### Dispensary Corner

**WORLDS** are colliding in California, where a cannabis dispensary is now offering its products for just one cent to people with a valid COVID-19 vaccination card.

The incentive at San Francisco's 7 Stars Holistic Healing Centre aims to "decrease COVID-19 infections in our region," according to a report in the *Los Angeles Times*.

A spokesperson for the dispensary said "we saw other local businesses offering vaccine incentives, and we wanted to add cannabis to that growing list...we hope to encourage other members of the cannabis community to do the same".

More than 400 people have already taken advantage of the offer being made possible through partnerships with several suppliers, which is redeemable on cannabis itself as well as sweets and chocolates laced with the compound.

About 65% of residents in the outlet's local area are vaccinated, but there is still some hesitancy within the cannabis community, including some people who have a "distrust for 'Big Pharma'," the spokesperson said.

"It does seem to be moving the needle...these are \$20, \$30 products...I think it actually helping get some of these folks in the cannabis community."

The dispensary has also applied to be a mobile vaccination site through the California Department of Public Health, but its application is currently still pending.

## Guild to monitor API bid

**AUSTRALIAN** Securities Exchange (ASX) listed conglomerate, Wesfarmers, has launched a \$687 million bid for pharmacy wholesaler, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API).

The unsolicited, non-binding indicative offer was announced this morning (**PD** breaking news), with API's major shareholder, Washington H Soul Pattinson, which owns 19.3% of the business, agreeing to vote in favour of the proposal.

The offer would see Wesfarmers - which divested its ownership of Coles in 2018, retaining a 4.9% stake in the supermarket giant - purchase 100% of API's shares for \$1.38 per share, a 21% premium on Fri's closing price of \$1.145.

Wesfarmers Managing Director, Rob Scott, said the acquisition of API would provide an attractive opportunity to enter the growing health, wellbeing and beauty sector.

"If the proposal is successful, API would form the basis of a new healthcare division of Wesfarmers and a base from which to invest and develop capabilities in the health and wellbeing sector," he said.

"The combination of Wesfarmers and API is a compelling opportunity to capitalise on API's strengths

and positioning in these markets, while drawing upon Wesfarmers' capabilities in retail and distribution, our strong balance sheet and our willingness to invest in our businesses for growth over the long-term."

Responding to the bid, the API Board said it was undertaking an analysis "of whether the indicative proposal is reflective of the long-term growth prospects of API and the expected short-term impacts of the pandemic-related lockdown restrictions".

"In the meantime, API shareholders should not take any action in relation to the indicative proposal," the API Board said.

A spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia told **Pharmacy Daily** that the organisation was monitoring the bid and examining "any possible implications of it".

"The boards of both Wesfarmers and API have as a first obligation to act in the interests of their respective shareholders," the spokesperson said.

"The Guild similarly has an obligation to its members and its members' patients and it will monitor this bid accordingly."

## PSS join APC as organisational member

**THE** Pharmacists Support Services (PSS) has been named as an organisational member of the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC).

PSS President, John Coppock, said it was pleasing for the service to be invited to join the council.

"PSS sees this as a valuable alliance which will enable us to have input into discussions which are important to the future of the

pharmacy profession," he said.

"Education underpins the long-term wellbeing of members of the pharmacy profession.

"Emphasis on the importance of self-care and maintenance of good health must begin at the undergraduate level in pharmacy and continue throughout a pharmacist's career.

"PSS is keen to contribute to the work of APC."



### Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Andy Vuong**,

**Network Partner, TerryWhite Chemmart Milton, NSW.**



### Masterclass 2021 - Stronger connections

**THE** Terrywhite Chemmart Masterclass is such a powerful tool to connect our pharmacist network.

This year, the TWC team provided an educational event that really brought virtual reality to the screens of thousands of participants giving us a sense of normalcy in these tough times.

I was impressed by the effort put into the program and applaud the team for trying something different without compromising the quality of the program all while maintaining a sense of community across the TWC network.

A highlight for me, and something that we deal with so often, is the pledge to palliate. As a pharmacist experienced with nursing homes and the elderly population, the initiative really struck a chord and made me proud to be a TWC pharmacist.

The chat rooms developed by our Business Development Manager included everyone in the area making it feel like we were all in it together.

It was great to see and interact with other pharmacists sharing experiences and knowledge. If TWC can do this with the restraints of being virtual, I cannot wait to have this conference in person. Masterclass has motivated and empowered me with the tools for better practice and patient care.



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