



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

Pfizer COVAX for adolescents

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has granted provisional approval for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (COVAX) to be given to patients aged 12 years and older.

The regulators said the decision had been made "following careful evaluation of the available data supporting safety and efficacy".

Following the decision a spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia told *Pharmacy Daily* that eligible pharmacies should be given access to the Pfizer shot to help "achieve maximum coverage for all communities".

COVAX rollout moving up a gear

ALL 3,930 community pharmacies across Australia deemed suitable to become COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) sites will be able to request access to vaccine stock from Mon, with the Federal Government hitting the accelerator on its stalled immunisation campaign.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's announcement that pharmacies will be able to access supplies of the AstraZeneca vaccine yesterday, has been welcomed by both the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, said the decision would be "great news for communities across Australia", noting modelling showed it would "speed up the national vaccination strategy by several months".

"To date a handful of pharmacies in regional, rural and remote areas have been able to provide COVAX to patients," he said.

"But [this] announcement means

patients across all of Australia will soon be able to access their COVAX through their community pharmacy which is the most accessible health destination and often provides extended operating hours and access at weekends.

"These pharmacies are fully indemnified by the Government and informed consent protocols will be followed for patients."

The decision to activate all approved community pharmacies will reduce the reliance on state-run mass vaccination hubs and make it easier for patients to access vaccines, PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, said.

"This is the patient-centric approach that Australia has been waiting for – and will expedite completion of the rollout," he said.

"As we've seen in countries [such as] the UK and the United States, utilisation of local pharmacist immunisers has allowed them to reach their respective vaccination



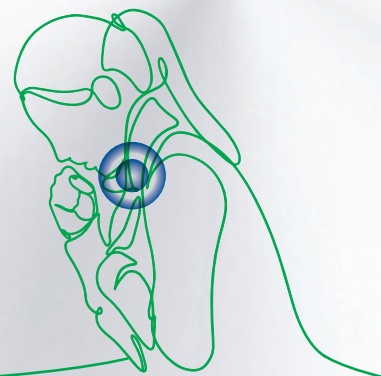
targets on schedule.

"The Federal Government's indemnity scheme already covers pharmacists administering COVID-19 and they are fully equipped with the knowledge and resources to effectively deliver the vaccine to their communities.

"Pharmacists will be able to target those at-risk Australians, particularly the elderly, who remain unvaccinated – negating the need to queue at mass vaccination hubs for extended periods of time.

"Seeing that your local pharmacist is now offering vaccinations will normalise the vaccine itself and will help combat both hesitancy and complacency."

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Calls rising as pressure mounts: PSS

COVID-19-INDUCED pressures including staff shortages and patients presenting with symptoms of the pandemic virus are elevating stress levels amongst the profession, Pharmacists' Support Services (PSS) Executive Officer, Kay Dunkley, has revealed.

Dunkley told *Pharmacy Daily* that the lockdowns seen across the country at various times over the last month were impacting pharmacists, "especially those on the frontline".

"Call numbers to PSS have increased overall, in part related to lockdowns and the stress that brings, but also due to increased awareness that it's okay to seek support," she said.

"We encourage everyone to seek support during these lockdowns and at any time when they are experiencing stress.

"All services supporting mental health are seeing an increase in people contacting them.

"Unmanaged high levels of stress

can lead to burnout and mental health issues such as depression.

"The issues pharmacists and pharmacy staff are experiencing include people presenting to them with symptoms of COVID-19 and also being listed as exposure sites and then having to go through the deep cleaning process.

"In NSW many pharmacists and pharmacy staff are having to go through regular COVID-19 testing which is unpleasant and many staff are having to go into quarantine leaving their colleagues in the pharmacy understaffed.

"Some pharmacies and pharmacy departments have split the staff into teams to ensure that services can continue to operate but then have less people on the ground at any one time.

"Some pharmacies are having difficulty attracting locums and relief staff due to their location in COVID-19 hotspots which also places pressure on the remaining staff and makes it hard to operate



a pharmacy."

Dunkley encouraged pharmacists to take breaks and have some down time.

"Take your rostered days off so that you can return to work with renewed energy," she said.

"Also we need to support each other and be pleasant in our interactions.

"Teamwork is essential and we all need to support each other."

PSS's hotline is available on 1300 244 910 between 8am and 11pm every day of the year.

No more missed opportunities

MOVES to activate community pharmacies as COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) sites will enable the profession to boost uptake Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, believes.

Speaking on Melbourne's 3AW yesterday, Tassone said pharmacies who request stock from Mon will be in a position to commence vaccination services within two to three weeks, with the AstraZeneca vaccine initially.

While many pharmacies are expected to rely on booking systems, Tassone said some may offer walk-in services, noting "there's been so many missed opportunities with the COVAX" where pharmacists could have administered shots to patients had they been activated and stocked.

Pharmacy 2030: Your Pharmacy, Your Community – Transformational Business Strategies for a Sustainable Future

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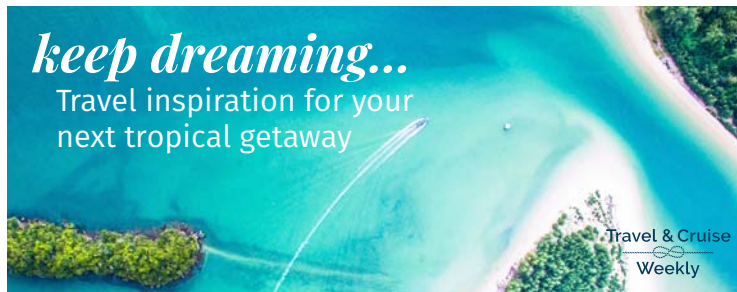


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Pharmacist postpones cycle

ALIVE Pharmacy Warehouse founder, Nick Loukas, has announced the group's Ride for Isabel charity cycle in Far North Queensland will be postponed until Oct.

In a post on Facebook organisers said the event which was due to take place on Sun had been rescheduled out of "an abundance of caution to protect the community of Yarrabah", due to uncertainty around COVID-19.

"I know I speak for all involved in what will be an amazing event, in saying that we must protect the people of Yarrabah so the ride will be held in Oct, in lieu of this Sun," Loukas said.

The event aims to raise funds to support the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, with funding going to supporting neonatal services.

CLICK HERE to find out more.

'About bloody time': ACT

PHARMACISTS in the ACT are looking forward to joining the COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) rollout, following the Commonwealth Government's decision to activate all eligible stores, with Pharmacy Guild of Australia Territory Branch President, Simon Blacker, saying "it's about bloody time".

Following the National Cabinet decision on 22 Apr to defer the expansion of COVAX services through all community pharmacies, with the exception of some in regional, rural and remote areas, ACT stores had been excluded from the rollout, until Prime Minister Scott Morrison's announcement yesterday.

Blacker told **Pharmacy Daily** that more than 60 Canberra-based pharmacies had been approved as COVAX sites by the Commonwealth Department of Health and the Guild anticipated "the vast majority of them will say yes to the invitation to join the rollout".

"From our perspective it's just

good to be involved," he said.

"We've been waiting on the sidelines [for months] - about bloody time is one way to sum it up.

"Because the [Federal] Government had said regional, rural and remote [areas were the priority] the ACT Government was getting nowhere with the Commonwealth.

"ACT pharmacies had been frustrated, but we understood the ACT Government's challenges whilst they were waiting on National Cabinet."

With the rollout set to commence, Blacker said the next step would be for the ACT Government to amend legislation to empower pharmacists to administer the AstraZeneca vaccine to patients under 60 years, as current regulations in the jurisdiction only authorise the shot for the over 60s.

He also called on Territory legislators to lower the age limit for patients receiving mRNA vaccines following the Therapeutic Goods Administration's decision to grant provisional approval for the Pfizer-BioNTech jab to be given to adolescents aged 12 years and older (see **page one** for more).



Dispensary Corner

NOT every word uttered by radio host, Kyle Sandilands, is worthy of praise, but his *Get Vaxxed Baby* jingle has earned favoured track status for NSW Health Minister, Brad Hazzard.

Set to the tune of Queen's *Under Pressure*, with a reworking of Vanilla Ice's one-hit-wonder *Ice Ice Baby*, Sandilands implored listeners to "take two shots and COVID's handled".

"Just relax, lay-down your tinfoil hats and just get vaxxed, so we can go back to the old ways, shaking hands, kissing strangers all day," he said.

Speaking during yesterday's NSW daily COVID-19 update, Hazzard said the song was "the light of my life this morning".

However, it appeared Premier Gladys Berejiklian was less keen on Sandilands' effort, announcing it was her "time to leave", as the Health Minister gave a wholehearted endorsement of the track.

CLICK HERE to check out the minute-long track.

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