



Put pharmacy first in Qld COVAX plan

PLANS to open mass COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) hubs in Queensland should not be implemented until after community pharmacies have joined the immunisation campaign, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

Announcing plans to open vaccination services to people aged 40 to 49 years, Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, said that State health authorities were paving the way for mass vaccination centres later in the year (**PD** 03 Jun), contrasting with comments made by the State's Chief Health Officer (CHO), Dr Jeannette Young, at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) last month (**PD** 24 May).

Responding to the Premier's comments, a Guild spokesperson told **Pharmacy Daily** that the organisation would continue to

press for community pharmacies to be involved in the rollout.

"Community pharmacies remain keen to come on board for the COVID-19 vaccination and we are watching the rollout in Queensland with great interest particularly to ensure our pharmacies receive all the required support and advice from both levels of Government," the spokesperson said.

"If Queensland Health have now decided to go down the path of the mass vaccination hubs as a model, it would be our preference that this be done after community pharmacies are brought onboard."

"The community pharmacy option offers more points to access COVID-19 vaccination across Queensland and with greater convenience to patients".

Speaking at APP, Young had told community pharmacists she wanted "pay back" for backing the



2014 Queensland pharmacy flu vaccination trial, which led to the rollout of pharmacist vaccination services.

"I do not want to go and stand up mass vaccination clinics in school halls on weekends," she said.

"I want you to do mass vaccination, because your communities know you... and you do it all the time with flu."

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UNITED Chemists is offering pharmacists of all levels opportunities to grow their careers, experience working in remote locations and secure attractive pay rates.

See **page three** for more.



Deus Luggya
Pharmacist-owner & team
Bakewell NT

'Smart drug' fine

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has fined a Queensland man \$7,992, for the alleged illegal importation of an unregistered nootropic medication, or "smart drug", containing armodafinil, branded as Waklert.

APC welcomes three new directors

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has announced the appointment of three new Board Directors, to replace the departing trio of Professor Iqbal Ramzan, Gayle Ginnane and Leanne Wells.

The new Board Directors include Monash University Pharmacy Faculty Director of Experiential Development and Graduate Education, Associate Professor Kirstie Galbraith, chronic pain management and mental health occupational therapist, Helen Spiteri, and NSW Health Illawarra

Executive Director Finance, Abbas Alibhai.

APC Chair, Associate Professor Sue Kirsas, said the new appointees would bring "diverse strengths and experiences to the Board's decision-making process".

"I have no doubt they will make an exceptional contribution to pharmacy education, accreditation and training," Kirsas said.

The Chair also thanked the outgoing directors for their contributions to the APC.

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Dispensary Corner

COVID-19 vaccination services are set to go underground along the US/Canadian border, as part of an effort to boost vaccine rates in Windsor in southwestern Ontario.

Windsor Mayor, Drew Dilkens has secured the support of the Windsor-Detroit Tunnel Corporation to close the Canadian side of the tunnel linking the two countries, to facilitate his plan to get US COVID jabs into Canadian arms.

The cunning strategy will see US pharmacists administer vaccines across the international border, *CBC* reports.

"Your feet will be firmly planted in Canada and the pharmacist's feet will be firmly planted in the US, and they'll just reach across and give you the vaccine," Dilkens said.

The Mayor came up with the plan after contacting Canadian Government officials to request access to unused expiring vaccines from the US.

Dilkens said the tunnel idea emerged after bureaucrats in Ottawa shot down other suggestions, which included bussing residents across the border to Detroit - which has been closed to non-essential travel since Mar 2020 - to get vaccinated.

CBC reported that a line to mark the border would be painted across the tunnel this week to clearly identify the international boundary.

"This is not the optimal place to do it, but given no other choice, we're prepared to do it," Dilkens said.

Cyber threats real for pharmacies

PHARMACY owners and managers are being urged to invest in multiple layers of defence against growing threats of cyber attacks, including specialist insurance cover.

With an average of 164 cyber crime reports being made each day in Australia, pharmacy insurance specialist, Carollo Horton CEO, Giuseppe Carollo, warned pharmacies were far from immune to attack.

"Pharmacies storing sensitive and personal customer information, now using e-prescriptions and My Health Record, they are at increased risk of cyber attacks and data breaches," he said.

"If a cyber attack takes place, pharmacies may not be able to access personal computers, [may be] unable to dispense, make online Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) claims, order stock or even use their point of sale (POS) to sell stock."

Carollo warned pharmacy owners



that their obligation to notify both the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and their customers about data breaches, could cause significant reputational damage to their businesses.

He told *Pharmacy Daily* that there has been an increase in the number of pharmacies taking out cyber insurance policies since the beginning of the year.

Carollo added that cyber insurance combined with strong IT

infrastructure was key to helping pharmacies respond quickly to attacks.

"It should be part of a pharmacy risk management plan and is very cost effective," he said.

"Cyber insurance works alongside a pharmacy's IT support provider to replace compromised PC's, manage damage to a pharmacy's reputation, assist with any breach reporting and looks at reimbursing any out-of-pocket costs."

UK audit shows value of pharmacies

DATA from the 2021 Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) Pharmacy Advice Audit reveals that "unpaid pharmacy advice is preventing 70,000 people from going to Accident and Emergency or an NHS walk-in centre", each week.

The audit of almost 6,000 British pharmacies found the average pharmacy provided close to 17 unremunerated consultations every day.

"The audit results indicate that every week pharmacies help over 730,000 people seeking advice for symptoms and more than 263,000 people about an existing medical

condition," the PSNC said.

"In almost a quarter of these informal consultations (24%), people seek advice about COVID.

"Pharmacy teams were able to provide expert advice to an incredible 97% of those who sought it, with just over half (54%) also leading to the sale of a medicine."

The PSNC added that the scale and scope of advice given by pharmacists identified in the audit would help to demonstrate the sector's value to the public and the NHS as well as providing the Committee with evidence to present to the Government in future negotiations.



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