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## Pharmacy a mental health solution

**PHARMACISTS** are ready and willing to play a key role in a redesigned mental health and wellbeing system in Victoria, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, believes.

Welcoming the final report of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Tassone urged the State Government to commit to implementing all 65 recommendations.

Tassone noted that the report highlighted the need for a major reform and redesign of the State's mental health and wellbeing system, with community-based services set to offer a full range of supports that people living with mental illness or psychological distress need to recover.

"The Guild takes this opportunity to again reiterate community pharmacy's readiness and willingness to be part of the solution," he said.



"As the most accessible health professionals, community pharmacists can play a critical role in the provision of mental health services including prevention, health promotion, medicines management and monitoring.

"This is particularly evident in rural and regional areas.

"We believe that there are many social and economic benefits

that would result from engaging community pharmacy to contribute to improving the provision of mental health care services including as part of a multidisciplinary mental healthcare team.

"We stand ready to work with the Victorian Government to help implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission for the benefit of Victorian patients."

Today's issue of *PD*  
Pharmacy Daily today  
features three pages of news.

### Defibrillator push

LIFE Pharmacy Group (LPG) is continuing to rollout defibrillators across its network.

Working with retired ironman, Guy Leech, and the Heart180 initiative - which aims to locate defibrillators within 180 seconds of every person in the country - LPG has installed its 10th defibrillator, at Orana Mall Pharmacy, Dubbo, NSW.

LPG CEO, Michael Flannery, said Heart180's campaign "aligned perfectly" with the group's vision to offer the highest level of pharmacy care to the store's local communities.

"For me it was an easy decision to support this great cause," he said.



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## PSA offers 'low cost' PI insurance

**MEMBERS** of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) will have to opt out of a new professional indemnity (PI) insurance scheme launched by the body over the weekend, when they renew their membership.

PSA Member Insurance is set to put the Society in direct competition with Australian pharmacy PI market leader, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL), which has historically supported PSA events and conferences.

The PSA named BMS Group as its "official and exclusive broker for PSA Insurance - Professional Indemnity", with the global firm facilitating PI cover for members of more than 70 regulated health professional organisations in Australia and Canada, including the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists.

Explaining the rationale for setting up an alternative PI cover the PSA said it was to provide "more choice" with a "low cost and competitive insurance option, designed for pharmacists across different practice settings".

"PSA wants to ensure that pharmacists are supported into the



future as their careers evolve," the PSA said.

"As the peak body, PSA sets the practice guidelines for pharmacists and is constantly working with governments at all levels and is perfectly placed to support pharmacists managing risk."

The PSA cover includes a \$20 million limit of indemnity per claim for PI and Public and Products Liability, with an annual limit of \$60 million.

It also provides unlimited run-off cover when members have a leave of absence or retire, and unlimited

retroactive cover for past activities, with cover for "member therapy and counselling expenses in the event of a claim".

The PSA said the PI offering ensured members "have access to the most comprehensive coverage, additional, evidence-based risk management materials, and exceptional service for insurance queries and claims is paramount".

"BMS is a specialist broker dedicated to servicing health associations and their members and will continue to enhance the PSA Insurance for members. "

## GuildLink real-time AIR integration

**ENHANCEMENTS** to GuildLink's GuildCare NG digital solution are set to allow real-time integration with the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

GuildLink CEO, Arun Sharma, said the update was a "natural progression" for GuildCare NG, with legislative changes requiring pharmacists to report information on COVID-19 and flu vaccinations they administer to



the AIR, or face penalties.

"It will help pharmacists meet the mandatory reporting requirements, and it will free up pharmacists' time, by making the process more efficient," he said.

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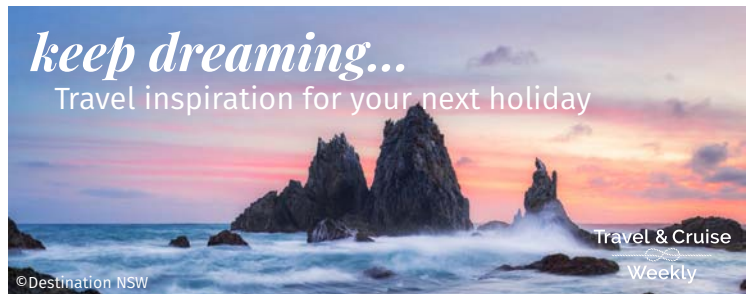
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## Guild backs substitution legislation

**NEW** legislation allowing pharmacists to substitute prescribed medicines when a product has been declared to be in “serious scarcity” is a commonsense move, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, believes.

Under the new laws, a legislative instrument will be registered each time a substitute medicine is needed to address a serious scarcity, which will make the adoption of the notices easier and more consistent across all States and Territories.

Having a notice listed as a legal instrument removes the need for State and Territory Governments to recognise the substitutions in their own legislation, delivering faster and more consistent integration.

“Medicine shortages have been a long-term problem, exacerbated over the past 12 months by COVID-related disruptions,” Tambassis said.

“Allowing pharmacists to substitute specific medicines without prior approval from the prescriber will go a long way in helping to ease pressure on doctors and help patients get faster access to alternative medicines when there is a serious scarcity.

“The Therapeutic Goods Administration has recognised this as one management strategy for medicine shortages and with the Guild’s support and advocacy, has led on having this implemented permanently through legislation.

“The next step is for the Government to allow the substituted medicines to be dispensed as pharmaceutical



benefits so patients are not adversely affected by costs.

“It is also critical that serious shortages are identified as early as possible so this process can be activated and the impact on patients minimised.”

Tambassis added that pharmacists should continue their usual practice and for prescribers to be promptly notified following the substitution.

## Dispensary Corner

**AS WELL** as providing vital protection against coronavirus, having a COVID-19 vaccination has also been found to make you a more desirable prospect on dating apps.

Users of the Tinder app have become increasingly aware of the effect, with a 258% rise in users mentioning the word “vaccine” in their online bios between Sep and Dec 2020.

*Business Insider* cited a spokesperson from another app called OKCupid saying “not only is the vaccine becoming the biggest talking point on dating apps, it’s actually becoming a huge deal-breaker”.

Some say it could provide a key incentive for vaccine take-up and defence against anti-vaxxers.

The issue has also been proliferating on social media channels, including a tweet from Washington DC-based journalist Sarah Kelly who posted details of a text message (pictured) describing the “most 2021 rejection ever”.



This week Pharmacy Daily & Evolt are giving away an Evolt 360 Body Composition package valued at \$2500 - a high tech body composition platform that is proven to increase profitability, drive foot traffic, whilst engaging with the local community and establishing brand loyalty. To learn more click [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) to enter & to see last weeks winner.

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\* T&C'S APPLY

## Pharmacist jailed

**BRITISH** pharmacist, Balkeet Singh Khaira, is set to spend 12 months behind bars after funneling thousands of doses of prescription painkillers onto the black market.

Khaira was busted after an investigation by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency of his mother’s pharmacy found 800,000 pills unaccounted for.

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