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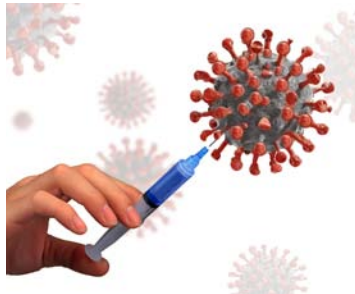


Guild pushes for equal COVAX pay

DISPARITIES in the rates of remuneration that pharmacists and GPs will receive for administering COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) is disappointing, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, believes.

Speaking during a webinar focused on the national COVAX rollout, Tambassis noted that the Government had previously advised the Guild “that all vaccinators would be remunerated at the same rate”.

Under the national rollout strategy pharmacists who have completed the appropriate training and working in pharmacies that have been approved by the Pharmacy Programs Administrator, will be eligible for payments of \$42 or \$48 per patient - depending on the



location of the store and the patient receiving both doses of the vaccine in the same pharmacy.

However, GPs will be paid between \$55 and \$64.90 for administering the two doses to patients, while also being eligible to claim a \$10 Practice Incentive Payment (PD 01 Feb).

“We are disappointed that GPs are being paid more, and moreover have the ability to claim [a payment] for assessing patients even when patients refuse to receive the vaccine, or perhaps are not eligible to receive the vaccine at that time,” he said.

“We at the Guild are strongly

advocating on behalf of members on these issues.

“It is the Guild’s position that all vaccinators, in the interest of the public health goal of vaccinating as many Australians as quickly as possible, that are capable can participate, but also [are] remunerated at equal levels for providing exactly the same service.”

Career success

PHARMACY recruitment specialist, Raven’s Recruitment has released the ninth episode of its Your Pharmacy Career Podcast, featuring an interview with Australian Pharmaceutical Industries National Healthcare Service Manager, Regina Cowie.

CLICK HERE to listen now.

Today’s issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from TerryWhite Chemmart.



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D'Ath to back full scope push

QUEENSLAND'S Health Minister, Yvette D'Ath, has voiced support for pharmacists to be able to work to their full scope of practice.

Speaking at a Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch International Women's Day breakfast on Mon, D'Ath said the profession has a pivotal role to play in primary healthcare.

"It's important that community pharmacies continue to expand on the full scope of services offered as they play such a critical role in our Queensland communities," she said.

D'Ath praised the profession for challenging "outdated" views of pharmacists' capabilities, by offering new services to communities as frontline primary healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID stymies grad pay review: PPA

PLANS for a review of pharmacy graduate pay rates under the Pharmacy Industry Award has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving the profession at risk of losing talented new pharmacists, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) warns.

Releasing data from its Community and Hospital Pharmacists Employment and Remuneration Report 2019/20, the PPA revealed that pharmacy graduates were "the lowest paid compared to every other profession in Australia", with the average pharmacy graduate earning \$49,600 a year, \$13,000 less than the median salary for all graduates.

PPA President, Dr Geoff March, said the union had worked with the Fair Work Commission to push for a review of graduate pay under the Award.

"This review of graduate pay, which has been delayed because of COVID-19, has now been initiated and will consider what



the appropriate rate of pay is for graduate pharmacists and a wide variety of other professions," he said.

March warned the disparity in starting salaries for new pharmacists compared with remuneration rates enjoyed by graduates in other areas - notably dentistry where the median undergraduate salary was \$84,000 - could see the profession miss out on talented individuals in the future.

"Pharmacy graduates are the lowest paid compared to every other profession in Australia and this is a major concern for the future of this vital sector," he said.

"If the pharmacy sector is going to continue to attract the talented graduates it needs to ensure the community is provided with quality services and health care, it's clear we have to provide them with proper pay, decent working conditions and clear opportunities for career progression."

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PSA seeks WA election commitments

WESTERN Australian politicians are being urged to voice their support for the expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice ahead of this weekend's State elections.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) WA Branch President, Dr Fei Sim, called on the leaders of the State's four main parties to outline their position on a number of critical community health issues, including improved access to vaccines,

"ensuring timely access to medicines through continued dispensing", funding of mental health first aid training for community pharmacists to connect vulnerable patients with care when they need it urgently, and to allow pharmacists to administer prescribed medicines to improve the management of patients with complex conditions.

"As the peak body representing the 3,423 Western Australian pharmacists, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is asking you to commit to improving the health and wellness of all Western Australians through these pharmacist-related initiatives," Sim said.

WA Premier and Labor leader, Mark McGowan, had said his Government recognised pharmacists as key stakeholders in the development of health policy and as important providers of primary healthcare.

The PSA noted that McGowan said Labor would seek to continue to work with the profession to expand the community pharmacy immunisation program, ensure pharmacists are involved in the review of WA's medicine supply chain, and to work with pharmacists advocating to the Federal



Government to retain continued dispensing measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

National Party leader, Mia Davies, has also offered "in-principle" support for the PSA proposals, while Green's health spokesperson, Alison Xamon, said the party would back legislation and action to increase funding for immunisation programs, and push for a review of the COVID-19 response to inform ongoing regulation and future planning for medicines dispensing.

"We support the provision of mental health workplace interventions including mental health first aid training and the allocation of specific funding for this purpose," Xamon said.



Dispensary Corner

AN ARIZONA man is pursuing legal action against Costco after a joke made by a pharmacist employed by the discounter ruined his chances of reconciliation with his ex-wife.

The Arizona Supreme Court revived Greg Shepherd's case, which had been previously dismissed by Maricopa County Superior Court, *The Mercury News* reported.

Shepherd's case related to a script for an erectile dysfunction treatment, that had been included as a sample by his doctor.

Court records noted that Shepherd said that he had handed the medication back on two occasions and requested that it be removed from the script in future.

However, in the midst of reconciliation with his ex-wife, Shepherd asked her to pick up his order, and again the erectile dysfunction medication was included.

Shepherd said the woman had handed the pack back to the pharmacist "and the two joked about it".

His ex-wife then dropped off his medications and informed him that she was aware of the erectile dysfunction medication and no longer wanted to be with him.

She then told his children and friends about the medication.

Costco has acknowledged the pharmacist's joke violated the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act*, which prevents disclosure of medical information.

Win an Evolt 360 package

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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