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## Guild wants CSO to distribute COVAX

**FEDERAL** Health Minister, Greg Hunt, is being urged to reconsider plans for logistics specialist, Linfox, to be the exclusive distributor of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX), and allow Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers to support the national rollout.

Speaking during a webinar last week, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, said there were still a number of 'unknowns' regarding the distribution of vaccines and consumables to pharmacies.

"There are aspects [of the COVAX campaign] that we are still unsure of and we are working hard to get this information to you soon," he said.

"How are you going to actually order the vaccines? Where are you going to get the consumables from?"

"I can tell you the Government has decided to use Linfox exclusively for these vaccines, but we're advocating pretty hard to get the CSO wholesalers involved



as well, because obviously the CSO wholesalers deliver to your pharmacy on a daily basis.

"We've got no problem with bringing in a competitor, but let's not make it an exclusive direct supply problem again, as we've always advocated against.

"We've written to the Minister and asked 'why have you decided to use Linfox as an exclusive distributor?'"

"We have no issue with Linfox being part of the solution, but you should also be using the CSO wholesalers, because for pharmacies it's easier for us to order from those particular wholesalers."

Tambassis said the Government had yet to clarify what consumable

materials required for the COVAX rollout will be provided to pharmacies and whether pharmacies will have to purchase them, adding that vaccine allocations for pharmacies had yet to be confirmed.

He added that the Guild was "acutely aware of the strategic importance of the successful COVID-19 vaccination program through community pharmacy and the opportunities this may open up".

Tambassis said a successful rollout of the COVAX campaign could see pharmacists gain access to the National Immunisation Program across the whole country in line with the Guild's full scope of practice strategy.

### Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus a full page from EzyMed.



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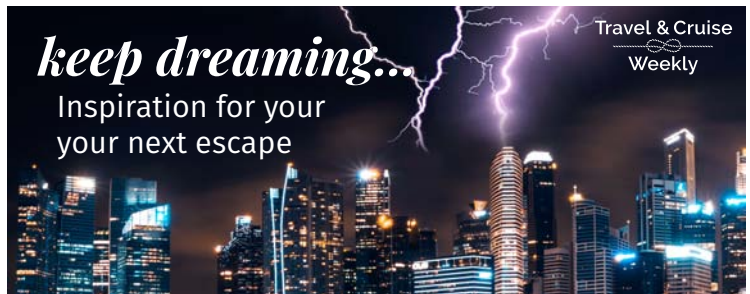
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## Choosing Wisely

AUSTRALIAN patients will be encouraged to ask more questions of their health providers as part of the Choosing Wisely Week campaign to reduce unnecessary tests, treatment and procedures.

NPS MedicineWise Client Relationships Manager, Dr Robyn Lindner, said patients are being urged to be more proactive in engaging with healthcare providers around their treatment.

She said patients should use Choosing Wisely's five key questions to trigger conversations with health professionals, to ensure they can make informed decisions.

The questions include:

- Do I really need this treatment?
- What are the side effects?
- Are there simpler, safer options?
- What happens if I do nothing?
- What are the costs?

**CLICK HERE** to access the Choosing Wisely Week 2021 engagement toolkit, which features promotional activities.

## Pharmacy defibrillator training push

PHARMACY owners will be encouraged to have their staff trained and confident in using defibrillators, as part of a new partnership between the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and Guy Leech Heart180.

The alliance aims to promote the benefits of having a defibrillator located within a 180-second proximity of every Australian by Dec 2025, to reduce the impact of 30,000 lives lost annually to Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

Announcing the new partnership, Guild Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood, said the out-of-hospital cardiac-arrest rates in Australia needed to be addressed.

"It is believed more than 33,000 people experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in Australia every year," she said.

"The survival rate for these people is estimated at 9% on the high side, and as low as 5% on the downside.

"By any measure, these survival rates are frightening.

"For every minute that passes after a person has a cardiac arrest, the chance of survival decreases.

"Quick action can save a life and this is why we at the Guild have partnered with Heart180 to raise



awareness of the risks of cardiac arrest and to start the process of trying to have a defibrillator located in every pharmacy throughout the country, with pharmacy staff fully trained in how to use it.

"There are some 5,900 community pharmacies across Australia, and in capital cities 97% of people are no further than 2.5km from a pharmacy.

"In regional areas, 65% of people are within 2.5km of a pharmacy.

"Community pharmacy is at the heart of every community."

Former Australian Ironman surf lifesaving champion and founder of Heart180, Guy Leech said, there

was a need to reach as many people as possible to understand the risk.

"It makes sense that your local pharmacy has a defibrillator on hand and there's a pharmacist who is trained to assist," he said.

## Ezy DAA solution

PHARMACISTS looking to maximise their dose administration aid (DAA) business can automate packing while boosting their business growth with EzyMed.

See **page five** for more.

## MedAdvisor's Pharmacist Phil retires

AUSTRALIAN medtech firm, MedAdvisor, is rolling out a rebrand that will see it drop the familiar face of its ambassador, Pharmacist Phil (pictured).

MedAdvisor Marketing Director, Sarah McIntyre, said the company embarked on its rebranding journey in Aug 2020, conducting an online focus group to develop a logo that "truly reflects the joyful simplicity" of



the company's brand.

"The outcome is a friendlier, more approachable logo that captures our personality," McIntyre said.

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## PSA celebrates excellence in SA

**PHARMACISTS** from across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote parts of South Australia came together for the Pharmaceutical Society of South Australia SA/NT Branch's annual Celebration of Excellence in Pharmacists Care ceremony.

Aged Care Pharmacist and University of South Australia Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, Dr Manya Angley, was named as the State's Pharmacist of the Year, with Branch President, Robyn Johns, acknowledging her extensive work as a community and hospital pharmacist.

"Apart from her practical and academic contributions to pharmacy, Manya has led many research projects and has a strong interest in supporting the patient along the continuum of care through medication management," Johns said.

"She has led state and national medication research projects into post-discharge medication

management which have been implemented at Royal Adelaide Hospital, Flinders Medical Centre and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

"Dr Angley's testimony to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with a Disability highlighted serious concerns with the use of psychotropic medications and the ongoing need for pharmacists' involvement in the care for people with an intellectual disability."

The SA Early Career Pharmacist of the Year title went to Stacey Putland, who has been a strong advocate for improving regional, rural and remote access, particularly in Aged Care.

"This includes advancing practice and developing new funding models as an embedded pharmacist in aged care and facilitating greater accountability for medication safety in several jurisdictions around SA," Johns said.

"Stacey has worked at a number of regional hospitals across the State,



including Whyalla and Mildura, as a clinical pharmacist and has been instrumental in providing a clinical pharmacy service. Her contribution includes four years as a guest tutor and lecturer at University of SA."

Retired Adelaide pharmacist, David Cosh, was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his ongoing contribution to pharmacy over a 40-year career.

The PSA presented a Gold Medal Award to pharmacy graduate Yik Xiian Chai for her outstanding academic achievements.



### Dispensary Corner

**IF YOU** thought a cheeky glass of wine or bottle of beer and a less than healthy snack were going to get you through the dark days of COVID-19, think again.

Federal politicians are being urged to implement new legislation to prevent future pandemics by prohibiting alcohol, processed foods and cigarettes, while mandating healthy eating and exercise.

A Parliamentary petition signed by 32 members of the public, stated "prevention is far greater than cure" when it came to pandemic viruses.

Principle petitioner, Lauren Ambrose Owen, backed the calls for a booze ban on the findings of a study which reported that 99% of COVID-19-related deaths were among patients with "underlying health issues, type 2 diabetes, obesity and heart disease".

"Healthy diet and exercise are vital in preventing those health conditions and therefore also preventing death and lessening the severity of COVID," the petition said.

"We therefore ask the House to take strong measures in banning all processed foods, drinks, alcohol and cigarettes."

Given Dispensary Corner enjoys a tippie or two over a cheese burger and fries, we're a little anxious about this idea!

## Backbencher calls for AZ COVAX pause

**FORMER** Federal Resources Minister, Senator Matt Canavan, is calling for a pause in the rollout of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine (COVAX), while investigations into blood clot concerns take place.

While a number of European countries have suspended the rollout of the vaccine, the National's backbencher said Australia was now one of the few countries still administering it.

"Given that we are in a country that does not face an imminent risk of coronavirus spread then surely the prudent approach here is to suspend our rollout and just take a look at the evidence that will emerge in coming months," he said.

"It's clearly time for us to suspend the rollout here if almost every European country is doing the same."

## Rx drug bust

**BRITISH** police have arrested five people suspected of selling a "significant quantity of prescription-only and unlicensed medicines" through illegally operated websites.

Following the bust, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency Head of Enforcement, Andy Morling, warned patients against buying medicines online.

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## TGA issues recall

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued recalls for seven listed medicines due to the presence of high levels of *Artemisia annua* or *Artemisia absinthium*, warning they pose an unacceptable risk if used in pregnancy.

Details of the seven products and batch numbers impacted by the recalls are available [HERE](#).

## Wizard growth continues



**WESTERN** Australian banner, Wizard Pharmacy, is set to add its 34th store in the state when it opens an outlet at the newly built Innaloo Medical Centre Complex next month.

The new pharmacy will be owned by existing Wizard franchisees, Aaron Van Vliet and Paul Rees, who said their experience with the group since converting their store at Westfield Innaloo Shopping Centre was a key reason for opting to open the new shop under the Wizard brand.

“Since becoming a part of the

Wizard family in December 2020, our customers have benefited from an extensive range of competitively priced products in-store, an expanded professional service offering, and an even better membership rewards program,” Van Vliet said.

He added that the new medical centre pharmacy would give patients in the area access to “a complete health experience and will help support local GP-pharmacist relationships to ensure all aspects of patient care are covered”.

## Flu season approaches

**VACCINATIONS** in community pharmacies will take on greater significance in the coming months once the full rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program comes into effect.

Wholesalers have announced that supplies of the flu vaccine have begun being delivered to community pharmacies.

Reminding everyone of the need to also have the flu vax is important, particularly with so much focus on the COVID-19 vaccination program.

Maximizing the uptake of people being vaccinated against COVID-19 is critical to help in getting our lives and businesses back onto a more normal footing and people are out and about more – and so exposed to the flu virus.

Because of the lockdowns and movement restrictions, last year the flu statistics were amazingly low. The Immunisation Coalition reports there were 21,356 Laboratory confirmed notifications of influenza in Australia in 2020, compared with 313,061 for 2019.

The low numbers for last year may lead people to think they don't need a flu vax this year. This is absolutely not true. Getting the flu vax is just as important as ever.



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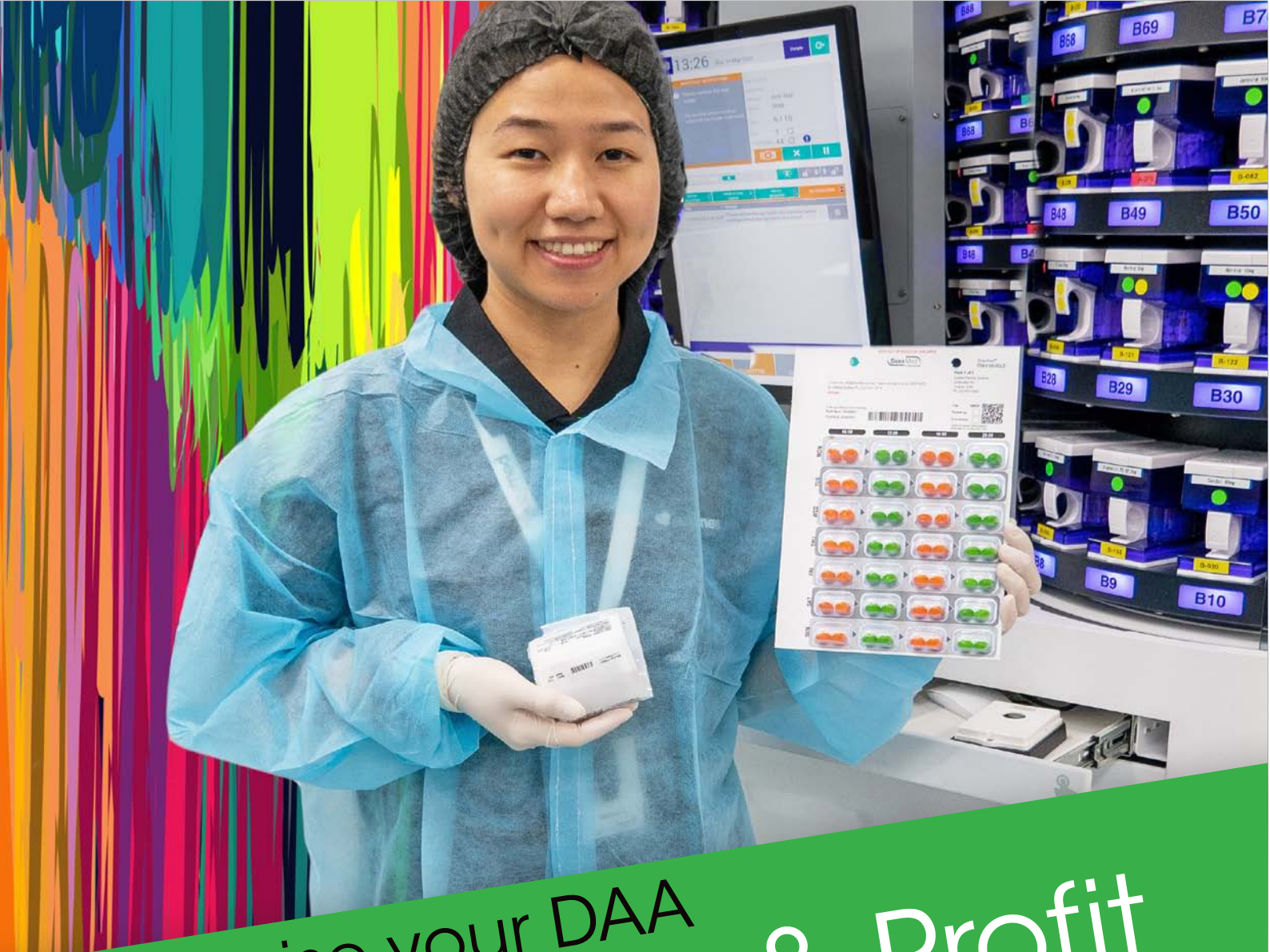
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