

# APP 2021

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- COVID-19 vaccination implementation – how to best execute
- A live demonstration of Active Script List – the impact on electronic transfer of prescriptions
- COVID-19 vaccine rollout: a review of the early weeks
- An update on Medicinal Cannabis (CBD) Pharmacist Only Medicine
- Consumer behaviour in a post-COVID world



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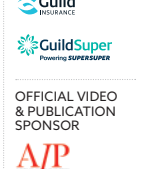
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## WA legislates for pharmacist COVAX

**PHARMACISTS** in Western Australia are the latest to receive the green light to administer COVID-19 vaccinations (COVAX), with the State Government approving legislation to ensure the profession will be eligible to join the Federal Government's planned rollout.

The Structured Administration and Supply Arrangement (SASA) authorises registered pharmacists and nurses employed by a pharmacy that has been approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health, to administer COVAX approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), excluding the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine.

Under the SASA, interns who have completed their immunisation and COVID-19 training will be able to administer vaccines under the direct supervision of a registered pharmacist who has also undergone the required training. The changes have been

welcomed by Pharmaceutical Society of Australia WA Branch President, Dr Fei Sim, who said the profession would play an important role in the COVAX program.

Sim noted that pharmacy students and assistants will be able to assist with consent and administrative roles within the campaign, but will not be eligible to administer vaccines.

Community pharmacists across the country are expected to start administering COVAX in May, when Phase 2a of the national program is due to commence, however, to date no pharmacies have received approval to take part in the vaccine rollout.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has expressed concern over the lack of certainty around the Pharmacy Programs Administrator's (PPA's) announcement that the approval process for community pharmacies that have expressed an interest in taking part in the campaign will not conclude until



May (*PD* 22 Mar).

However, Sim said that community pharmacies that do not receive approval from the PPA to participate in Phase 2a, "may still be involved in later phases of the vaccine rollout".

"All community pharmacies who meet requirements [will] have the opportunity to participate in the vaccine rollout as more vaccines become available," she said.

Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news, plus a cover page from **APP 2021**, and a full page from **Pharmacium**.

### Always trusted

**PHARMACISTS'** reputation as trusted sources of healthcare advice will be the focus of this year's World Pharmacists Day (WPD) on 25 Sep.

Announcing the 'Pharmacy: Always trusted for your health' theme for WPD, International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) President, Dominique Jordan, said the confidence patients have in the profession was critical.

Jordan noted that patients' trust in pharmacists was based on positive relationships they have built over years, consistency of care and the expertise they possess.

### Don't miss APP

**DELEGATES** planning to attend this year's Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP), can secure a \$120 discount booking before earlybird registration closes on Mon.

The COVID Safe event will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre from 20 to 23 May.

See today's **cover page** for more details.

### Make it happen

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See **page four** for more.

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## Know the rules

**PHARMACY** owners in NSW must ensure that their stores comply with mandatory requirements to audit stocks of Schedule 8 medications in Mar and Sep each year.

A practice alert issued by professional indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) yesterday, noted that it was "aware of regulatory notifications against pharmacists and pharmacy owners who have overlooked the obligation to complete the biannual S8 audit".

PDL noted that the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008* "clearly states a periodical inventory of stock of drugs of addiction must be done in Mar and Sep of each year".

The alert advocated more frequent checks, noting discrepancies in S8 inventory should be reported to the Pharmaceutical Services section of NSW Health, adding "it is legislated [to do so] and any delay in reporting can place a pharmacist in a more difficult position".

## Vic extends emergency dispensing

**STATE** and Territory Governments are being urged to follow Victoria's lead in extending emergency dispensing and digital image prescribing orders to ensure patients retain access to critical medications.

Under the measures gazetted by the Victorian Department of Health this week, pharmacists in the state will be able to provide Schedule 4 medications to patients who have been unable to obtain a prescription from their GP in line with Commonwealth approved continued dispensing orders, until 27 Sep.

They will also be authorised to dispense medications where a prescriber has sent through a digital image of a prescription, with the order also in place until the same date.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, welcomed the extension of the two emergency orders, but called for the measures to be implemented on a permanent basis.

"These emergency orders have played an important role in ensuring the continuity of care for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic environment," he said.

"With regards to emergency supply or continued dispensing



of prescription medicines where it is impractical for the patient to obtain one from their doctor, it really should be an ongoing arrangement for the benefit of patients.

"If pharmacists can be entrusted to utilise their skills and expertise in this way during a pandemic, then surely we should be allowing this to happen ongoing.

"The extension of the Victorian emergency orders follows the sensible decision by the Commonwealth Government to extend COVID-19 arrangements from their end to ensure a Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme subsidy applies for eligible patients in these instances.

"In a release by Prime Minister Morrison announcing these extensions – it was stated that approximately 289,000 patients had already benefited from receiving at least one medication from continued dispensing arrangements.

"This is almost 300,000 individual patients who did not have to go without, and potentially more serious complications were avoided.

"Any other state and territory who has not yet made the necessary arrangements to align with the Commonwealth orders should do so as a matter of priority to reduce any risk of interruptions of care or uncertainty for patients".



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## Dispensary Corner

**COVID-19** restrictions have been a touchy topic for some over the last 12 months.

For many of us wearing a mask or isolating have been small sacrifices to make for the greater good.

Others have felt their personal rights trumped those of others and have attempted to go about their lives with a disregard for public health that leaves the more compliant types somewhat deflated.

Take the story of Dubliner, Gemma Green, aged 24, who decided to livestream herself speeding around the Irish capital while being pursued by local police, on 01 Mar.

Adding insult to injury the aspiring Instagram starlet thought it would be a nice idea to take a trip to Spain, landing herself in hot water with the law for a second time by appearing at Dublin District Court yesterday to face speeding charges, in breach of home quarantine rules, gaining 14,000 new social media followers along the way.

## Board issues warning

**PHARMACISTS** need to use their professional judgement to deny supply of potentially hazardous medicines and ensure their quality control provisions are fit for purpose, the Pharmacy Board of Australia believes.

Following recommendations from the Coroner's Court of Victoria, the Board launched an analysis of notifications involving oral methotrexate (MTX) in Australia between 2010 and 2019.

The review found 28 notifications involving 26 pharmacists and 23 incidents were made between 01 Jul 2010 and 30 Jun 2019, with seven fatalities recorded and a further nine patients requiring hospital care.

More than half (54%) of the notifications related to dose administration aids being packed with once-daily dosing instead of weekly dosing, with problems with labelling also featuring prominently.

"In reviewing these cases, half of all errors involved a failure in packing or checking of DAAs," the Board said.

"Pharmacists, including proprietors of pharmacies must ask themselves, what quality control provisions are in place to avoid once-weekly MTX being inadvertently packed once-daily?"



"Consideration must be given to what solutions could mitigate error in this hazardous process."

"Appropriate labelling of medicines is always important and is even more so for medicines such as MTX with a narrow therapeutic index, which have the possibility to cause lethal toxicity if directions for the patient are absent, ambiguous or incorrect on the primary container."

The Board noted that in two cases pharmacists had failed to gatekeep prescription errors made by prescribers, and dispensed MTX as prescribed.

"While the number of notifications involving oral MTX was relatively low, the outcomes were frequently catastrophic," the Board said.

"Pharmacists need to ensure their own processes and those of the pharmacy where they are practising support them to exercise their professional responsibilities in the safest way possible."

## Win with Jacaru

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