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## WA pharmacists secure access to NIP

**PHARMACISTS** in Western Australia are set to gain access to National Immunisation Program (NIP) influenza stock to vaccinate patients aged 65 years and older.

WA Health's decision follows the success of the State's Pharmacy NIP trial, Pharmacy Guild of Australia WA Branch Director, Matthew Tweedie said.

"This is further evidence that West Australians trust their local pharmacy to provide a safe professional immunisation service," he said.

"The Health Department have long understood the important role community pharmacy plays in helping West Australians access critical front line health services.

"Mark McGowan's West Australian Government has committed, in their second term, to work with the Guild to expand the role pharmacy is trained to play both in immunisation and primary health care services more generally.

"We look forward to working



with the Premier, Health Minister Roger Cook and the WA Health Department to further leverage the WA pharmacy network that currently services one million West Australians every week."

**MEANWHILE**, Tweedie said the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the capacity of the community pharmacy workforce.

"When fear and uncertainty reigned last year community

pharmacy remained open and in WA administered more than a quarter of a million vaccines in the months of Apr and May 2020 alone," he said.

"This included the delivery of lifesaving medications to over 17,000 Aged Care residents and over 15,000 home deliveries of life saving medicines to patients who could not or did not want to leave their homes."

Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **TePe**.

## Rural medication adherence issues

NPS MedicineWise has issued tips to help improve medication adherence for patients living in rural and remote parts of Australia.

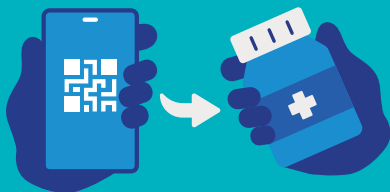
With more than 1.3 million rural Australians failing to take their medications at all or as prescribed, NPS is urging them to ask questions about their medicines, to know what the active ingredient is.

The NPS is also encouraging rural patients to follow instructions to ensure they are taking their medicine appropriately, and to keep track of all the medicines they are using.

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## Vax a gateway to service expansion

**PHARMACY-BASED** vaccination services could be a potential gateway for the expansion of pharmacist-delivered public health services, researchers believe.

A survey of community pharmacists' perceptions of public health conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic, found a lack of consistency regarding the definition of public health among participants.

The authors from Griffith University's School of Pharmacy and Pharmacology noted the pharmacists who took part "mostly discussed individual patient screening services".

"Participants appeared to value aspects of public health that they were familiar with or participated in; most commonly primary health prevention measures (i.e. blood pressure monitoring), smoking

cessation, needle and syringe programs and vaccination," the authors said.

All participants recognised pharmacist-administered vaccination as an important public health intervention.

"The success of Australian community pharmacy vaccine programs was viewed as a potential gateway to the expansion of public health services.

"In contrast, many participants expressed discomfort with sensitive or unfamiliar service topics, particularly alcohol or sexually transmitted infection screening and opioid replacement programs, with some identifying lack of training and awareness as contributing to their lack of confidence in these unfamiliar areas."

While pharmacists expressed support for taking on a greater role



in the provision of public health services, barriers relating to a lack of time, remuneration, training, standard and the unsuitability of some premises were identified.

The authors noted that enablers to a greater role in public health initiatives included pharmacists' accessibility, and opportunity for new funding models.

The paper was published in the *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice*.

## PBS listing for Dupixent

**DUPIXENT** (dupilumab) has been listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for patients aged 12 years and older with severe uncontrolled asthma caused by type 2 inflammation.

The biological therapy targets two key proteins - interleukins-4 and -13 - that drive the inflammatory response in the airways of 50% to 70% of patients with severe asthma.



## Emyria, Cann deal to deliver S3 CBD

**MEDICINAL** cannabis producer, Cann Group, is partnering with "data-backed drug development company", Emyria, to seek accelerated registration of a Pharmacist-Only cannabidiol (CBD) medicine.

Under the agreement, Emyria's EMD-003 drug development program will use Cann Group's proprietary Gelpell microsphere technology as the basis for seeking a Schedule 3 registration for treating unmet needs in mental health.

In a joint statement to the



Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) the companies said, "pivotal clinical trials [of Cann's Satipharm CBD capsules] are in advanced stages of planning and are being guided by insights from Emyria data".

## Medicines shortages consultation

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is seeking feedback on four proposals to combat medicines shortages.

The TGA noted that medicines shortages have been of particular concern during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have been reviewing the ways in which we can better assist affected Australian patients and their healthcare providers," the TGA said.

"Specifically, we are seeking feedback on possible reforms that would prioritise the

evaluation and registration process for certain important generic prescription medicines, to reduce the risk of shortages; encourage registration of more generic versions of medicines known to be affected by shortages, to mitigate the impact of those shortages; and support a more reliable supply of overseas-registered medicines imported into Australia as substitutes when the Australian medicine is in longstanding or repeated shortage."

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## Dispensary Corner

**GETTING** needles into people's arms has been the goal of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout around the world.

To achieve this governments across the globe have set out programs identifying key priority groups, such as frontline health worker the elderly and at risk patients, leaving the rest of the population to wait patiently for their turn.

However the wait appeared to be too much for staff at a private school in Ireland, who have been conducting classes online since Jan, with reports emerging that 20 teachers have been vaccinated, while 140,000 of the state's frontline health workers have yet to get their jab.

The report follows an earlier case where family members of a senior staff member at a hospital in Dublin were given COVID shots ahead of patient-facing employees.

*The Irish Times* reported that office staff at the state's Health Service Executive have also been vaccinated, despite having no patient interactions.

## GP shortage concerns

**SHORTAGES** of GPs in regional areas will end up costing patients and taxpayers, pharmacist turned Federal MP, Emma McBride, warns.

Addressing the House of Representatives last week, McBride - the MP for Dobell on the NSW Central Coast - said a number of primary care providers in her constituency were struggling to attract and retain GPs.

"The Central Coast is a popular place for young families and older people to live, but it's also a place where GPs books are closed and patients are waiting weeks for routine appointments," she said.

"Yet the Central Coast is not classified by this government as a distribution priority area for GPs, which means that recruiting and retaining GPs in our region is tough."

McBride said the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre has informed patients that from the end of this month it will not be able to offer any future appointments until they can recruit a new doctor.

"This shortage of GPs also impacts affordability," she said.

"Across Australia, out-of-pocket costs for GP appointments have increased by 37% since this Government came to office.

"This is being felt by many people



in my community, especially those who can least afford it.

"Our community deserves better. "As an MP and as a pharmacist, I'm calling on the Government to act now to review these classifications and to urgently improve access to primary care in communities like mine.

"If people don't have access to GPs, they end up in crisis in ED.

"The cost to them and to our health system is too much. It must change.

"The Government has to act now."

McBride noted that Central Coast GP, Dr Sachin Choudhary - who manages two practices in the region - had said the current classification model was "a farce", adding, "we are in crisis and we need help".

## SA hospital gets dispensing robot

A **NEW** dispensing robot, installed at Adelaide's Lyell McEwin Hospital, is expected to cut medication errors.

The robot is also likely to give pharmacy staff more time to take on non-dispensing tasks.

SA Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Stephen Wade, said the \$1.6 million investment was an innovative way to enhance patient care.

"With the benefit of this advanced technology, we are empowering our clinicians and staff with the right tools to better support the health and wellbeing of patients," he said.

"This machine can store up to 36,000 packages at any one time, enhancing efficiency and streamlining the process of delivering medicines on a significant scale.

"The Lyell McEwin Hospital is now the second SA Pharmacy public hospital site to install a dispensing robot in South Australia, after the Royal Adelaide Hospital in 2017.

"This enhanced service comes to the north of Adelaide for the very first time."

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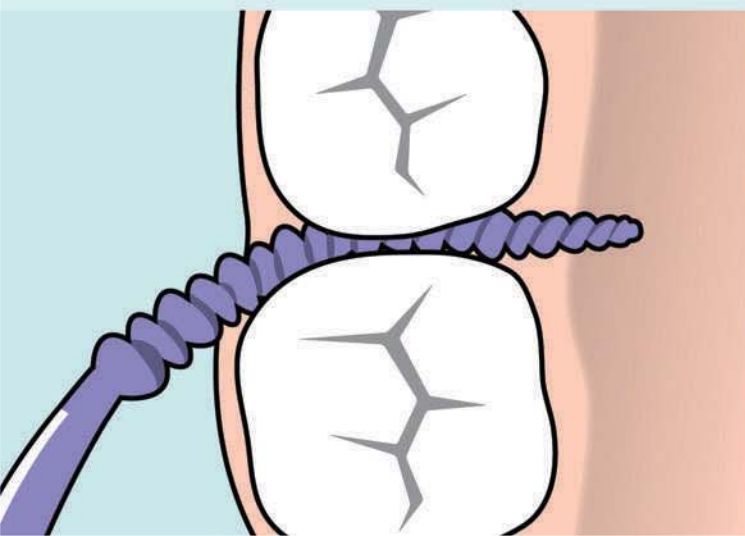
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