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Pharmacy COVAX rollout

HEALTH Minister Greg Hunt this morning confirmed that community pharmacies will be able to administer COVID-19 vaccinations, with 56 sites in Queensland to be the first to deploy the inoculations.

However the full Stage Three rollout of pharmacy COVID-19 vaccinations will not take place until Sep at the earliest, but "more likely in Oct or Nov," Hunt told delegates at the APP2021 conference on the Gold Coast.

The Queensland rollout is being championed by Qld Minister for Health, Yvette D'Ath, who has been focused on ensuring that the state's regional and remote communities have access to COVID-19 vaccines via community pharmacies.

Qld Guild Acting President, Chris Owen, congratulated Hunt and D'Ath for "ensuring that Australians have access to the COVID-19 vaccination as quickly as possible".

Hunt said the proposal followed a National Cabinet decision last month which agreed that states and territories can choose to incorporate community pharmacies into their rollout plans in areas where there are "no or limited other points of presence".

However "as additional vaccine

supply is delivered over the coming months, additional community pharmacies will be brought on line to support an enhanced primary care rollout to ensure the broadest possible coverage for the community," Minister Hunt said.

Hunt promised that "community pharmacy will play an important role in the ramp-up of the COVID-19 vaccine in the second half of the year," with State and Territory talks under way for "additional engagement of general practices and community pharmacies".

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, a cover page from **EzyMed**, and full pages from:

- **Quick-Eze**
- **Sigma Pharmaceuticals**

DAA outsourcing

EZYMED is inviting pharmacies to outsource dose administration aid (DAA) services, with the first month free and then three months at half price - see the **cover page**.

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Something's got to change - Twomey

PHARMACY Guild National President Trent Twomey this morning urged State and Territory Governments to implement new legislation enabling community pharmacists to practice to the full extent of their training.

In the opening session of the Australian Pharmacy Professional 2021 (APP) conference on the Gold Coast, he said the profession must "strive to practice to full scope".

"We need to be at the forefront of change, to guide and ensure we restore our profession to the status and prestige it once had," he said.

"We need to lead primary healthcare initiatives in our communities and ensure that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme returns to a truly universal system, regardless of where you live.

"We are highly trained medicines experts who are restricted from performing the most simple of tasks - for instance we can sell a patient a vitamin B injection, but we can't help them with

administering it, whilst we can give them a flu vaccine.

"We can demonstrate to a patient how to use a reliever, but we can't actually press the button to ensure that they use it safely.

"Clearly things need to change.

"As qualified primary healthcare professionals pharmacists should have the authority to prescribe, to dispense, to administer and to review all medicines for all patients.

"This should be underpinned by robust national competency standards, it should be legislated in all States and Territories, and funded and recognised by the Commonwealth Government."

MEANWHILE this morning's APP sessions also included the announcement of the Pharmacy of the Year, which has been awarded to "all 5,900 community pharmacies across the nation".

The decision was described as "inspired" by Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt.

After a year in which pharmacists

supported communities through bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, Hunt told delegates that "I could not think of a wiser, fairer nor more appropriate choice."

"I think 2020 has been the finest year in the history of pharmacy in Australia, certainly in the last 100 years", he said.

"You were there, you were dispensing medicines, you were providing that emotional support, that mental health support, you were providing services... and above all else, you gave people a sense of belief that if our pharmacists were staying on the frontline, 'we can do this'."

Hunt also commended the Guild's collaboration with the Government in implementing anti-stockpiling measures, and the uptake of the Home Medicines Service, which has now seen over 2.6 million prescriptions delivered to patients.

An initial \$20 million allocation of funding in Mar 2020 has now grown to \$35.5 million, he said.

New Quick-Eze

QUICK-EZE Icy Mint flavour is the latest addition to the antacid range - see **page five**.

LEAPP with Sigma

SIGMA Healthcare is today highlighting its LEAPP Foundations program to support better patient health outcomes and improved business performance.

The pharmacist-led initiative includes coaching, tools and resources to improve leadership, communication, accountability and dispensary workflow.

Sigma says a pharmacy that has successfully completed LEAPP Foundations grows prescription volumes three times faster than non-LEAPP pharmacies.

For more details see **page six** of today's issue of **Pharmacy Daily**.

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Pfizer to return to wholesaler model

PFIZER'S decision to drop its decade-old direct distribution model and return to Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers (**PD** breaking news) has been welcomed across the industry.

Pfizer launched the partnership with DHL in late 2010 (**PD** 06 Dec 2010), with wholesaler peak body the National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA) at the time warning it could lead to the collapse of the CSO system guaranteeing delivery of PBS medications across the country.

Ten years on "we are a different organisation," according to Pfizer Australia and NZ MD Anne Harris.

"Moving from direct to wholesale distribution will enable a greater focus on our core business as a biopharmaceutical company, and better position ourselves for growth," she said.

Harris confirmed that from the end of Q3 2021 Pfizer will supply its full portfolio of innovative and off-patent medicines to community and hospital pharmacies via the national wholesaler model.

"Pfizer's biopharma business has a diverse product portfolio and range of sales in Australia...we will continue to offer next business day delivery through wholesale distribution partners, to more than 5,600 pharmacies nationally."

Harris said "we are committed to ensuring that patients have access to our medicines and vaccines in every location in Australia, and our direct distribution model has been a key contributor to this".

She also thanked DHL for its strong support, adding that Pfizer "remains committed to working closely with them for a smooth transition from our direct distribution partnership and ensuring continued patient access



to our medicines".

"We will continue to partner with DHL for our pre-wholesale activities," Harris confirmed.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia acknowledged the change, with National President Trent Twomey saying "this is good news for community pharmacies, who will now be able to access Pfizer medicines under the CSO, which ensures equity of access to Pfizer medicines delivered across Australia under the same agreement as all other CSO distributors".

Twomey acknowledged his predecessor, George Tambassis, who he said was "instrumental in delivering this change".

Pfizer has already signed a CSO distribution agreement with API, and said it would finalise deals with other wholesalers shortly.

API CEO Richard Vincent said "we are honoured that Pfizer Australia has entrusted us with

the distribution of its medicines to community pharmacists".

He said the volume provided under the Pfizer deal would deliver an estimated annual \$4 million boost to the API bottom line from 01 Sep this year.

Speaking as chair of the NPSA, Vincent added that "the certainty of uninterrupted and equitable distribution of medicines and vaccines to all corners of Australia has never been more important".

"As an industry we have continued to invest in a state-of-the-art national network that is dedicated solely to protecting the health of all Australians.

"We look forward to again supporting Pfizer to ensure its portfolio of innovative and off-patent medicines are efficiently and safely delivered to hospital pharmacies and more than 5,600 community pharmacies and their patients across Australia," Vincent concluded.

Dilaudid short

THE TGA has authorised the supply of an alternative product to address a current shortage of Dilaudid hydromorphone hydrochloride 1mg/mL oral liquid.

The sponsor has advised the TGA that it is in short supply until 09 Dec 2021, with the alternate product, Rhodes HYDROmorphine, having been approved for import and supply during the shortage.

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WHERE: APP 2021, Arena 1A

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Global pharmacy scholarship announced

A NEW \$100,000 initiative funded under the 7th Community Pharmacy Agreement will pay for an Australian early career pharmacist to work for up to 12 months in an overseas community pharmacy.

Announced this morning by Health Minister Greg Hunt, the World Pharmacy Council Scholarship exchange program is being backed by the Australasian College of Pharmacy, and will also see an overseas pharmacist work in Australia for a year once international travel restrictions are lifted.

Potential World Pharmacy Council exchange countries include Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, the USA or the UK, with the scheme open to pharmacy

graduates within their first five years of registration.

Hunt said "staying up to date with world-best practices is important for community pharmacies that are ensuring Australians receive the highest standards of medications and related advice, especially during the COVID-19 recovery and vaccination roll-out".

"Learning first-hand how pharmacy services are administered in other countries will help the scholarship recipients build on their technical, operational and interpersonal skills, and that's going to benefit not only their host pharmacies, but the industry overall," he added.

World Pharmacy Council Vice President, Doug Hoey,

who also represents the US National Community Pharmacists Association on the Council, said the program would "facilitate a two-way exchange of skills and knowledge to both import and export experiences at a practical level".

Australasian College of Pharmacy President, Michelle Bou-Samra, said the scholarship was the first of several new opportunities the College would be offering to recent pharmacy graduates that "go beyond the traditional course or seminar experience".

Expressions of interest can be lodged via the College's new website at acp.edu.au, with APP2021 attendees also invited to visit stand 363 this week to find out more about the program.



Dispensary Corner

AROMATHERAPY is believed to be able to help with many mental health issues, and a British car dealership believes it can assist in reducing incidents of road rage.

Pentagon Motor Group, which operates Ford, Peugeot and Vauxhall outlets across the UK, has just launched a new "Automotive Atomisers" range.

Specially selected essential oils have been curated into three varieties of in-car air fresheners, apparently scientifically based on an individual's driving style.

Options include "The Daily Driver" featuring lavender oil, lemon and yuzu oil; "The Road Tripper" with bergamot oil, eucalyptus and ylang-ylang; and "The Learner" which pulls out the big guns in terms of stress relief with rich neroli and lemongrass oil.

"Whether your stress levels are hiked up by gridlocked traffic, your patience gets tested by children arguing in the back of the car, or you're feeling anxious ahead of the driving test that's been postponed for the last 12 months - our new collection of three perfectly balanced scents will help to alleviate any bad vibes and create a drama-free driving experience," said Pentagon's Marketing Director, Jonathan Lingham.

The firm has however added a caveat relating to The Learner, with a formal disclaimer saying "although this scent is delightful and should calm the nerves, we cannot guarantee a driver's licence after a few spritz around the car".

AIR lookup

A NEW MedAdvisor feature allowing pharmacists to look up patient details in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) will be released early next month in the company's PlusOne platform.

A webinar showcasing the system last night attracted 340 registrations, with MedAdvisor saying the strong uptake reflected significant interest in the feature, particularly with influenza and COVID vaccination programs currently underway.

Pharmacists will be able to look up patient vaccination history using any vaccination recording form in the Record Services section of PlusOne, with MedAdvisor saying the update will "save pharmacists time and improve workflow efficiencies" as part of the end-to-end vaccination journey.

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EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper

Editor – Nicholas O'Donoghue

Contributors – Adam Bishop,

Myles Stedman

info@pharmacydaily.com.au

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Sean Harrigan, Hoda Alzubaidi

advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

BUSINESS MANAGER

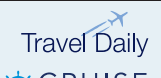
Jenny Piper

accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

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*Amcal Guardian LEAPP 2017 Cohort vs Amcal Guardian Non-LEAPP pharmacies



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