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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus a full page from UTS.

Butler confirmed for APP2022

SHADOW Health Minister, Mark Butler, is set to address pharmacy owners at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP2022) on the Gold Coast in Mar 2022.

Organisers confirmed that Butler will address the morning session on Thu 24 Mar, following the opening plenary, during which Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, is slated to speak.

Early bird registration for APP2022 is open, with a 100% refund guarantee for delegates unable to attend due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Immigration key to solving shortages

PHARMACY Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, is urging pharmacy owners to share stories of their staffing struggles as he seeks to build a case of pharmacist immigration.

Speaking during a Guild update webinar last week, Twomey described the community pharmacy sector's current workforce issues as "the number one reason I get phone calls from members at the moment, because we can't get staff".

"One of the things we're working on at the moment is with Minister Alex Hawke, the Minister for Immigration, to make it easier [for pharmacists to move to Australia] when the borders open," he said.

"We have that temporary inclusion of community pharmacists [on the Skilled Occupations List] for the purposes of responding to the pandemic, but we're going to have an influx of skilled migrants as we grow our way out of this massive debt



burden that we have as a country - similar to what we did after World War II - and I need to make sure that a larger percentage of those skilled migrants are community pharmacists.

"But to do that I need evidence, because without evidence all we have is really strong opinions.

"I'm fine for the evidence to be anecdotal, I'm fine for it to be a personal example, I don't care if it's just one paragraph.

"But could you please shoot off

an email telling me your specific circumstance and how hard you found it to get staff, whether it be in traditional hours, non-traditional hours, in a metropolitan area or regional, rural or remote locations.

"I need these examples to be able to build that case."

Twomey also confirmed that the Guild has been in discussions with employee pharmacists' union, Professional Pharmacists Australia, in relation to the ongoing workforce issues facing the sector.

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Dispensary Corner

DISGRACED British pharmacist, Balkeet Singh Khaira, has been booted out of the profession by the General Pharmaceutical Council.

The 38-year-old was jailed earlier this year, for his role in diverting more than £1 million-worth of prescription medications to criminals.

Khaira had used his position working in his mother's pharmacy to order 29,000 packs of diazepam, nitrazepam, tramadol, zolpidem and zopiclone, which he onsold to drug dealers.

A General Pharmaceutical Council hearing was told that Khaira had thrown his mother under the bus, by using her email in correspondence with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

Delivering the decision to ban Khaira from practicing as a pharmacist, Judge Heidi Kubik, noted his callous disregard for his mother and her reputation.

"You allowed five different types of addictive Class C drugs to be diverted onto the black market in significant quantities, some 29,000 packs deemed so diverted with a potential street value of £1,052,000," she said.

"The pharmacy was run by your mother for many years and your actions caused her to be arrested when she had done nothing wrong, and her business and reputation have suffered as a result of your actions."

We suspect that the pharmacy profession in Britain will be better off without Khaira's involvement.

Flu vax deadline looms

COMMUNITY pharmacy owners and store managers are being urged to put plans in place for their 2022 influenza vaccination programs ahead of the deadline for orders on 19 Nov.

A joint statement from the Immunisation Coalition, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, released this morning warned that the reopening of international borders following COVID-19-induced closure, was likely to lead to a resurgence in flu cases next year.

The Immunisation Coalition's Scientific Advisory Committee Chair, Professor Robert Booy, noted that early indications from overseas jurisdictions suggested that the low number of flu cases recorded in Australia this year was unlikely to continue into 2022.

"We need to be clear, 2021 has not be reflective of a typical influenza season," he said.

"All the measures associated with slowing the transmission of COVID-19 resulted in an abnormal flu season."

With experts forecasting a jump in flu cases, Immunisation Coalition Chair, Dr Rod Pearce, warned that it would be essential that immunisers



order adequate stocks of the vaccines.

"What is important now, is that we avoid a vaccine shortage next year because providers have reduced their vaccine orders for 2022, based on reduced cases and vaccine uptake this year," he said.

"We know that preorders for 2022 are significantly lower than this time last year.

"We cannot simply turn the manufacturing process on and off for influenza vaccination.

"It is important our providers are prepared, by ensuring sufficient supply levels are reached ahead of the season."

Pearce noted that co-administration of flu vaccine and COVID-19 boosters is now recommended by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisations.

Your views about biosimilars

Researchers at the University of Newcastle are looking for pharmacists to complete a short survey about their views and experience with biosimilar substitution.

CLICK HERE to find out more about the survey



Pharmacy Guild Update

APP 2022 program

APP2022 Convenor Kos Sclavos AM has announced the program for the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference & Trade Exhibition (APP) being held 24-27 Mar 2022 on the Gold Coast is now available online at appconference.com/app-program.

Mr Sclavos said the program highlighted some fantastic sessions that would appeal to everyone in the pharmacy industry.

"APP2022's program is absolutely bursting at the seams with incredible sessions and speakers," Mr Sclavos said.

"One of the greatest appeals from my perspective is the practical nature of the sessions.

"Much of APP2022's content will focus on providing attendees with practical information as we transition into this next stage in the fight against COVID-19.

"Three sessions, in particular, I'm looking forward to are Oilly Bridge's session on how to avoid burnout and bounce forward out of COVID-19, Professor Ross Tsuyuki's session on realising community pharmacy's full scope of practice and a panel session on the future of community pharmacy in a post COVID world."



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