

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages, plus a full page from **Dispense Assist**.

Blister pack recycling effort

OVER-THE-COUNTER

medication brand, Chemists' Own, has launched Australia's first free recycling program for blister pack waste.

In partnership with recycling company, TerraCycle, the Arrotex brand aims to redirect 650,000 blister packs from going into landfill in the first 12 months of the program, with patients being able to drop off blister pack waste at participating pharmacies.

The program will initially be rolled out through 49 Pharmacy Alliance stores in NSW and Queensland, with plans to expand nationwide at a later date.

Substance misuse 'part of the culture'

A VICTORIAN pharmacist who misappropriated more than 33,000 Xanax pills, allegedly for personal use, over a two and a half year period claims misuse of medication by pharmacists was common.

A Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) heard that William Trieu, had falsified patient supply records to access large quantities of the medication while working at a number of pharmacies in the State between Nov 2014 and Apr 2017.

Confronted by an Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) investigator, the 33-year-old initially said he had consumed all the medication, but later claimed to have destroyed some of the pills, the *Herald-Sun* reported.

Trieu was subsequently convicted and sentenced for altering prescriptions and possessing trafficable quantities of the medication in Nov 2019.

In a pre-sentencing report presented to the Victoria Magistrates' Court, Trieu confessed

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to using Xanax, meth and cocaine regularly to cope with the stresses of his job.

"We were pharmacists, we self-medicated, we knew what we were doing, it was part of the culture," he said.

The Magistrates' Court issued a two-year community correction order.

Speaking at the VCAT hearing last week, Council for the Pharmacy Board of Australia, Glyn Ayres, called for Trieu to be reprimanded and disqualified from reapplying for professional registration for a further 12 months to "protect the public".

MEANWHILE, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily* that Trieu's comments that medication misuse was prevalent amongst pharmacists was inaccurate.

"It is very saddening to hear of a professional colleague engaging in this type of conduct and we can



only hope that Trieu receives the necessary treatment and support he needs," he said.

"However, his experiences of self-medicating and consuming drugs of dependence that pharmacists have access to as part of their clinical work is not reflective of a 'culture' within the profession.

"Pharmacists take their responsibilities as custodians of medicines and champions of the quality use of medicines very seriously."

Tassone advised pharmacists struggling with work-related stress to contact the Pharmacists' Support Service on 1300 244 910.

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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




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Equitable workforce funding needed

CURRENT rural primary healthcare workforce programs have the potential to divert pharmacists away from community pharmacies, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Community Pharmacies for Rural and Indigenous Australia Advisory Group Chair, Simon Blacker, believes.

Speaking at a Senate Community Affairs References Committee hearing earlier this month, Blacker - who is also the Guild's ACT Branch President - said there needed to be a rethink about the funding models used to support the rural healthcare workforce.

Blacker noted that the current rural health strategy was focused on general practice.

"The Workforce Incentive Program Practice Stream provides support for general practice to employ allied health professionals, including a non-dispensing pharmacist, potentially diverting the available community pharmacy workforce and placing a risk to the sustainability of the local rural pharmacy," he said.

"Whilst there are a number of

community pharmacy workforce programs funded through the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA), these are not of the same quantum as GP workforce programs.

"The Guild believes that rural workforce strategies need to be holistic and equitable across all the health professions to ensure that Australians who are living in regional, rural and remote areas have access to the same breadth of pharmacy and allied health practitioners and services as those in the city do."

MEANWHILE, the Guild's Clinical Governance and Workforce Senior Pharmacist, Claire Bekema, told the committee that current service gaps in rural primary care could be addressed by enabling pharmacists to work for their full scope of practice, due to their "extensive professional training, skills and knowledge".

"Pharmacists are being underutilised, primarily due to legislative barriers currently limiting their scope of practice," she said.

"Rural pharmacists working to full



scope of practice would contribute to increased access to medicines and primary health care services in areas where medical services may be overstretched, limited in hours or unavailable.

"With a shortage of GPs in regional, rural and remote areas, future strategies need to be comprehensive and adopt an approach that looks at a suite of solutions that is focused not on one health profession but on how local collaborative models of care utilising all clinicians working to their full scope of practice can meet the health needs of their community."

Pharmacists key to diabetes support

FORECAST global healthcare workforce shortages will further enhance the role pharmacists play in diabetes management, the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) believes.

Launching FIP's *Diabetes prevention, screening and management: A handbook for pharmacists*, the organisation's Pharmaceutical Practice Board Chair, Paul Sinclair, noted that with diabetes case numbers expected to jump from 537 million patients worldwide in 2021, to 748 million by 2045, "it is imperative to ensure the healthcare workforce is prepared to care for people with diabetes and those at risk".

"While pharmacists are primarily trained to address health concerns through pharmacological means, they also have the necessary skills and

knowledge to provide prevention and screening services," he said.

International Diabetes Federation President, Professor Andrew Boulton, welcomed the new handbook, saying it "provides pharmacists with everything they need to know to help guide community members to make healthy choices and adopt healthy habits".

"You need only spend a few minutes at your local pharmacy to appreciate the significant role the community pharmacist plays in supporting community health," he said.

"Pharmacists are active members of the healthcare team, providing trusted advice into a community to which, more often than not, they also belong.

"From a diabetes care perspective, it is a key role."

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Tas braces for border reopening

TASMANIA'S hospital pharmacies' medicines stockholdings are being strengthened ahead of the island state's border reopening on 15 Dec.

Tasmanian Health Minister, Jeremy Rockliff, said the State Government had invested significantly to bolster medicines supplies to support ICUs to run for two to three months, "even if supply chains are interrupted".

The Tasmanian Health Service is also set to continue its statewide Home Medication Delivery service free of charge to patients, to support social distancing by allowing them to receive their regular "hospital-only medications" without attending public hospital premises.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Campbell McKay, Network Partner, TerryWhite Chemmart Alexander Heights, WA.**



Vaccinations - key to the future success of our business

BEFORE we joined TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) just over a year ago, vaccinations were not on our radar.

The pandemic obviously changed a lot of things, customers' expectations included, and it made my business partner Gavin and myself start to envisage a future for our business that was more heavily focused on health. That process led us to TWC.

TWC is undoubtedly the leader when it comes to vaccinations. Their commitment to training, one-on-one support and regular communication has given my team the confidence to deliver a service that currently makes us the sixth highest TWC COVID-19 vaccinating pharmacy in WA.

The workflow processes that TWC has provided streamlines everything from booking to dispense to AIR and has been an absolute game changer. This alone has allowed us to embrace this service and maximise the number of patients we can vaccinate each day as well as accommodate walk ins.

The marketing material and ease of booking through the TWC booking system has also seen many new patients come to our pharmacy, many of whom are making additional purchases in store and joining up to the TWC rewards program.

With the success of vaccinations, we are now looking to expand our service offering and really insert ourselves as health leaders in our community of Alexander Heights.



Dispensary Corner

PHARMACISTS' poor hearing, judging tones and general "poor customer service relations" are being blamed for 40% of unwanted pregnancies in Nigeria.

Comedian, Oluwatoyin Albert, claimed "many of their customers will end up not buying what they went to buy out of zero confidentiality" when they visit pharmacies, the *Nigerian Tribune* reported.

"Pharmacists – people that sell drugs are 40% [of] the cause of unwanted pregnancy in Nigeria because there is no time you go to buy a condom or contraceptive drugs that they hear you once, they must have you say it two times," she said.

"You will say give me a condom; they will still ask 'what did you say?'"

"They will make sure the person next to you knows what you are there to buy.

"Even if they finally hear what you want to buy, especially the ones that are old and put glasses on the edge of their nose, they will start looking at you with a judgemental eye like, 'Is your mother aware you are taking this?'"



Knife-wielding bandit robs pharmacy

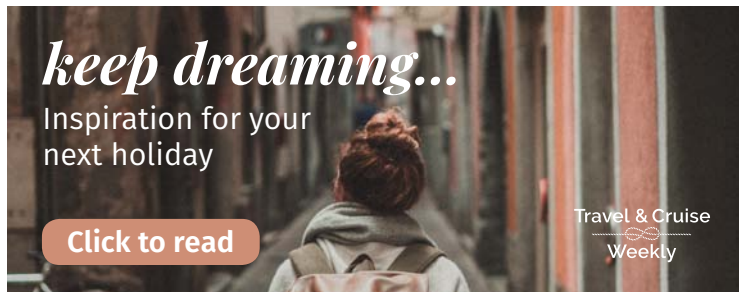
STAFF at a Sydney pharmacy have been left shaken after a brazen late-morning armed raid on Fri.

The masked bandit entered the store on Anzac Parade in Kensington, before 11am, brandishing a knife before threatening customers and employees.

The man, who was wearing a red hoodie, a surgical mask, dark trousers, and what appears to be white socks over his hands, grabbed \$200 in cash from the store's till before fleeing on foot, north along Anzac Parade.

NSW Police noted that its Eastern Beaches Area Command had attended the pharmacy and established a crime scene, adding that "no one was physically injured during the incident".

Speaking with *Nine News*, pharmacy owner, Rosa Colagrossi,

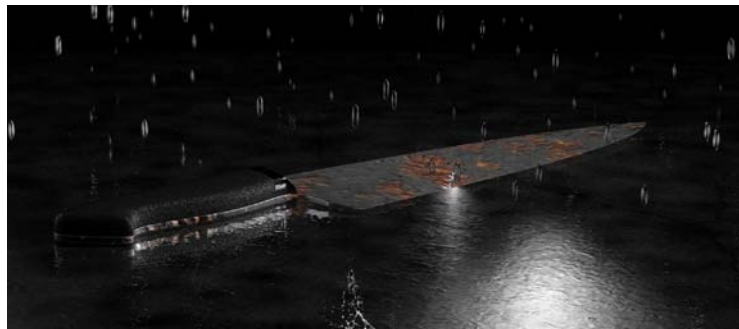


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said the incident was the second time the store had been robbed in the last three years.

She noted that staff did not realise the man was about to rob the store as masks are mandatory.

"When we used to see smiles and then someone came in with a covered face you would immediately knew you were being held up," she said.

Colagrossi said the attack had left her worried about the safety of the pharmacy's staff.

Team member, Michelle Spiro, said the incident has left staff "very shaken", noting the bandit had wielded his knife towards her colleague and demanded cash.

"He came very close," she said. "We're very shaken, it's a horrible experience."

Firm fined over counterfeit drugs

BRISBANE-BASED company, Performance Online Services Pty Ltd, has been slugged with fines totalling \$53,280, in relation to alleged breaches of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) issued the firm with four infringement notices over the export, supply and advertising counterfeit erectile dysfunction products, Xcalibur XXX Gold 8000 and Wicked Triple Platinum, which contained undeclared sildenafil.

The TGA said it "strongly discourages self-medication of erectile dysfunction medicine", urging patients to speak to their doctor about safe and effective treatments.

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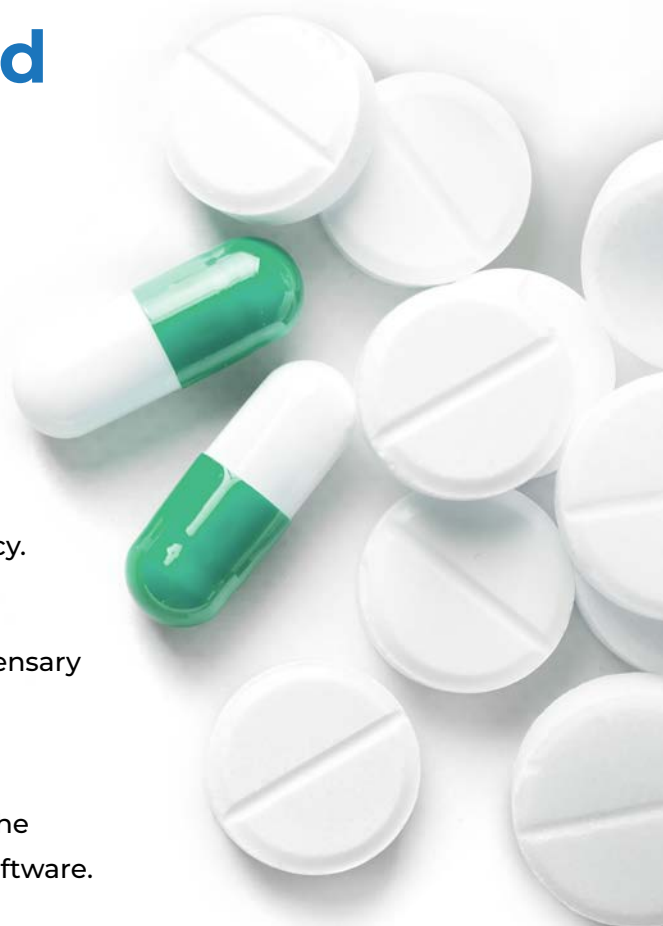
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