

Today's issue of PD

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

NTScript moved

LEGISLATION paving the way for the introduction of a real-time prescription monitoring system (RTPM) in the Northern Territory has been launched.

Announcing the legislation for the introduction of NTScript, Health Minister, Natasha Fyles, said the system would bring the Territory into line with other jurisdictions across the country.

Fyles noted that some jurisdictions currently operating RTPM had made their use mandatory, and "the same provisions are being proposed... to require prescribers and pharmacists to look up NTScript before prescribing or supplying a monitored medicine".

She added the system would promote "honest and collaborative discussions between prescribers, pharmacists and their patients".

Innovate pharmacy in rural settings

RURAL and regional settings are the ideal areas for Australia's pharmacy profession to implement innovative approaches for the role of the pharmacist, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, believes.

Speaking during the NSW Rural Doctors Network's Rural Pharmacy Workshop, earlier this week, Freeman said there was significant scope for pharmacists to play a greater role in patient care outside the major metropolitan areas.

While noting that "there's a huge workforce shortage within primary and tertiary care settings", Freeman told delegates there were opportunities for pharmacists to do more for rural communities.

"My view is that where we should be innovating is in these areas, because the demand and the need is so high," he said.

"By creating these additional roles for pharmacists it becomes more attractive [to work in regional and rural areas].

"It's not just remuneration that's important - that's certainly one side of it - but it's the professional satisfaction that someone's getting and if they can share their



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time between say a community pharmacy, or a general practice and working in some other unique role servicing that high level of need, I think that starts to make that role more attractive for people moving out into these areas."

Freeman noted that collaboration between rural health professionals was growing, highlighting the PSA's work with a northern Victorian general practice, to develop a prescribing pilot to optimise its use of a pharmacist working within the clinic.

"They've asked us to work up a prescribing pilot for them so that the patients with diagnoses already of chronic diseases can

be monitored and reviewed by the pharmacist, and prescribed [medications] therefore if appropriate," he said.

"But they have that clinical governance in place that they can loop back with the GP should there be a more complex case."

Freeman also highlighted the role regional and rural pharmacists have been playing in the Lift the Lip program.

"Pharmacists are doing some routine dental checks with children for dental carers, and applying fluoride paste for these children, and there's huge potential benefit that has for these communities going forward," he said.

Pharmacies hit 1 million Moderna mark

ROLLOUT of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine through the community pharmacy network has surpassed the one million dose milestone, according to figures from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, praised the work of pharmacists involved in the vaccination campaign in reaching the mark.

"Community pharmacies have done an incredible job administering one million Moderna vaccines, especially since they only joined the rollout in late Jul," he said.

"There is no doubt in my mind community pharmacies have driven vaccination across the country by offering convenient services that are easily accessible."



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Cutting waste

BLOOMS The Chemist North Perth owner, Colin Willis, is leading the way in implementing eco-friendly retail practices.

The WA pharmacist has revamped the store's stock, opting for products that are plastic-free, Australian-made, vegan-friendly and cruelty-free where possible.

Willis has set up a recycling station at the front of the pharmacy to collect waste that cannot go into domestic recycling bins, such as toothbrushes and disposable facemasks.

"Our planet has finite resources and our everyday actions have an impact on the environment, its wildlife and our future generations," Willis said.

"Our products are often packaged to ensure safety and efficacy, but often the compromise is towards environmental impact.

"We also want to show consumers and other businesses what is achievable, and hopefully help start an eco-conscious era in pharmacy."

Pharmacists' ethics high

PHARMACISTS are continuing to be ranked amongst the most ethical professionals in the country, the latest Governance Institute of Australia's *Ethics Index 2021* reveals.

The annual survey of Australians' perceptions of the ethical behaviour of industries, occupations and sectors, found the public has become increasingly cynical and untrusting over the last 12 months.

The results revealed that those working in the fire services were rated as the most ethical, with a score of 85, ahead of nurses (80), Ambulance services (72) and pharmacists (72).

General practitioners came in fifth place with an ethical rating of 71 (down sharply from 80 in 2020).

However, when it came to assessing the ethics of people respondents had personal contact with, GPs topped the list with a score of 77, while pharmacists came in second-place on 73.

Despite healthcare workers being rated highly, when it came to the ethical behaviour of organisations within the health sector, 2021 witnessed a decline in public confidence in key service



providers.

The survey found that confidence in pathology services specialists fell from 71 in 2020 to 65 this year, with public hospitals falling from 71 to 63 in the same timeframe.

When it came to reviewing the ethical behaviour of member associations the Governance Institute's survey found the Australian Medical Association (AMA) topped the list with a rating of 69, with no mention of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia or the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.



Dispensary Corner

AUSTRALIA'S Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) has been designed to ensure trips to the pharmacy do not leave patients with large out-of-pocket expenses.

However, the subsidised medicines program could do little to prevent a Queensland man's recent pharmacy visit from costing him more than \$1,700 - and he didn't even get what he was looking for, *The Chronicle* reported.

The 39-year-old was busted by police for multiple driving offences after an unsuccessful trip to a local pharmacy to seek medication to treat his asthma.

Toowoomba Magistrates Court heard that the pharmacy was closed when Beutel attempted to pick up his medicine, and he had driven over to a friend's house.

He was then pulled over by police who noticed the registration plate on the car did not match the vehicle, and they subsequently discovered Beutel was disqualified from driving, after being convicted of drug and drink-driving offences.

Beutel's unsuccessful trip to the pharmacy ended up seeing him plead guilty to several charges, including disqualified driving, driving an unregistered and uninsured vehicle and having registration plates that belong to an other vehicle.

Magistrate, Howard Orsborne, fined Beutel a total of \$1,737 and banned him from driving for another two years, for his failed pharmacy visit.

Sells steps in

SIGMA Healthcare has announced the appointment of Jeff Sells as Interim Chief Financial Officer (CFO) with immediate effect, following Jackie Pearson's resignation (PD 27 Oct).

Sells has been with Sigma for more than 11 years, including six years as CFO, and most recently as Executive General Manager Retail Pharmacy.

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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