

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus a full page from **Dispense Assist**.

COVID boost for Sonic Healthcare

PATHOLOGY services provider, Sonic Healthcare, has reported a net profit of \$1.3 billion for the 2021 financial year - up 149% on last year.

Announcing the results yesterday, the company noted that there had been "significant revenue and earnings contribution for COVID testing in FY21 and FY22 year-to-date".

The company reported that its Australian business generated \$1.9 billion in the year to 30 Jun, accounting for 23% of its total \$8.75 billion global revenue.

Community pharmacy 'worn thin'

INCREASED workloads stemming from changes in the way the public interacts with health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic, is pushing community pharmacy to its limits, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, warns.

Speaking at the Consumer Health Products Australia (CHP) Virtual Conference, yesterday, Twomey noted that the pharmacy sector had kept its door open throughout the crisis - while other professions had opted to provide care through telehealth - despite safety concerns, the consequences of maintaining access to medicines have started to emerge.

"Community pharmacists were just as scared and worried for themselves, their staff and their patients, as GPs were, the two professions handled this crisis in a very, very different way," he said.

"Community pharmacies stayed open, we donned up in personal protective equipment.



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"We did not shut, we did not reduce our hours, we were scared, our staff were anxious and that's coming out now in a lot of post-traumatic stress [and] fatigue."

Twomey warned delegates that when their sales representatives get back on the road in the coming months, that they will be engaging with tired pharmacists, many of whom have been unable to take a break for more than 18 months, due to workforce shortages.

"The hospital departments have

ramped up with pharmacists, paying ridiculous amounts of money on short-term contracts for them to be able to run their vaccination clinics," he said.

"And there haven't been any new overseas trained pharmacists come in, because the borders have been shut.

"So we're tired, we're worn thin, we may even be a little grumpy, so please don't take it personally, rock up with a flat-white - something like that will go a really long way."

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References: 1. Schuppan D, et al. Z. Allg. Med. 1998; 74:577-584 2. Albrecht M, et al. Clinical Pharmacology. 1992;47(2):87-92

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Guild seeks COVAX fraud guidance

EFFORTS to coerce pharmacists and other frontline immunisers into providing false COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) records are likely to increase, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia warns.

With public health law requiring people to be fully immunised against the pandemic virus to enter hospitality venues and many shops, the Guild has raised concerns about "a small number" of reported instances where pharmacists have been asked to falsify immunisation records, *The Guardian* reported.

Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily* that "there have been multiple case reports of individuals seeking to have false records of administration of COVAX included in their immunisation record".

"Whilst these instances seem to be isolated and few and far between, it is important that there is awareness of its occurrence

and a reminder to the public of obligations of health professionals with their registration and accurate recording of all vaccination events," he said.

"The health workforce has done an amazing job throughout the COVID pandemic and should not be subjected to requests that are not only a breach of legislation but would call in to question the registration and right to practice of a health professional.

"Pharmacists are accessible health and medicine experts that are there for our patients and communities to help educate and alleviate concerns around vaccinations.

"We are not there to be harassed or incited to break the law."

The Guild has called on authorities to provide uniform guidelines as to how pharmacists should respond to instances where members of the public attempt to



bribe or deceive them into falsifying their immunisation records, while also seeking tough penalties for COVAX fraudsters.

"Penalties akin to those that apply to quarantine breachers and those who ignore mandatory vaccination orders, should also apply to those seeking to bribe a vaccinator to falsify records or to manipulate records, either digitally or by having someone else get vaccinated in their place," the Guild said.



Dispensary Corner

A BRITISH couple has launched a desperate hunt for a particular type of snack food, after a national shortage of Walkers-brand chips created a culinary crisis in their home.

Their four-year-old daughter has an eating disorder, and Walkers oven-baked sea salt crisps are one of the only things she will eat.

The child's mother said she had several conditions including ARFID (avoidant or restrictive food intake disorder), meaning she will only eat the Walkers chips, toastie waffles and a particular brand of fruit puree.

Her fluid intake exclusively comprises sweetened almond milk and a prescription vitamin mix, with the mother saying the girl would prefer to receive an IV infusion than eat something she doesn't like.

"When your child relies on a food and you can't get it, it's really hard," she told the *BBC*.

"Me and my husband go looking round the shops for the crisps every day for an hour or two...we have a big extended family and everyone is looking out for them too.

"There's not a huge nutritional value in the crisps but the salt helps, it makes her drink more."

The woman said she often gets negative comments about her daughter's diet, from people who don't understand that "this is a registered eating disorder".

Walkers said the issue was due to an IT glitch as it prioritises other flavours, promising to get the sea salt crisps back on shelves in a few weeks' time.

New CHP Board

CONSUMER Health Products Australia (CHP) has confirmed the appointment of four new Board Directors, following its AGM yesterday.

The new members are, iNova Pharmaceuticals Managing Director, Andrew Jenkin, Johnson & Johnson Consumer Health ANZ Managing Director, Nadia Yu, Ego Pharmaceuticals Managing Director, Alan Oppenheim, and Vitex Pharmaceuticals CEO, Dr Aniss Chami.

CHP Independent Director, Phil Lynch, Aspen Pharmacare Australia Head of Consumer OTC, Alison Holland, and Anish Patel from GSK were re-elected.

Antimicrobial resistance funding boost

ADDITIONAL funding announced by the Federal Government this week, to monitor antimicrobial resistance in human health in Australia is being welcomed by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, confirmed a further \$14.2 million has been allocated to optimise the use of antimicrobial medications over the next three years.

SHPA CEO, Kristen Michaels, noted that improvements in prescribing practices during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic belied stagnancy in other key measurements.

"Appropriateness of antimicrobial prescribing has remained static since 2015, as reported in the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's AURA 2021 report, and compliance with key national and local guidelines decreasing 5% to 65.3% between 2015 and 2019," she said.

"During the pandemic, however, we've seen a large decrease in the amount of antimicrobials dispensed in Australia – we can't lose this 'silver lining' and, through their innovative practice embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams, specialised hospital pharmacists can lead the way."



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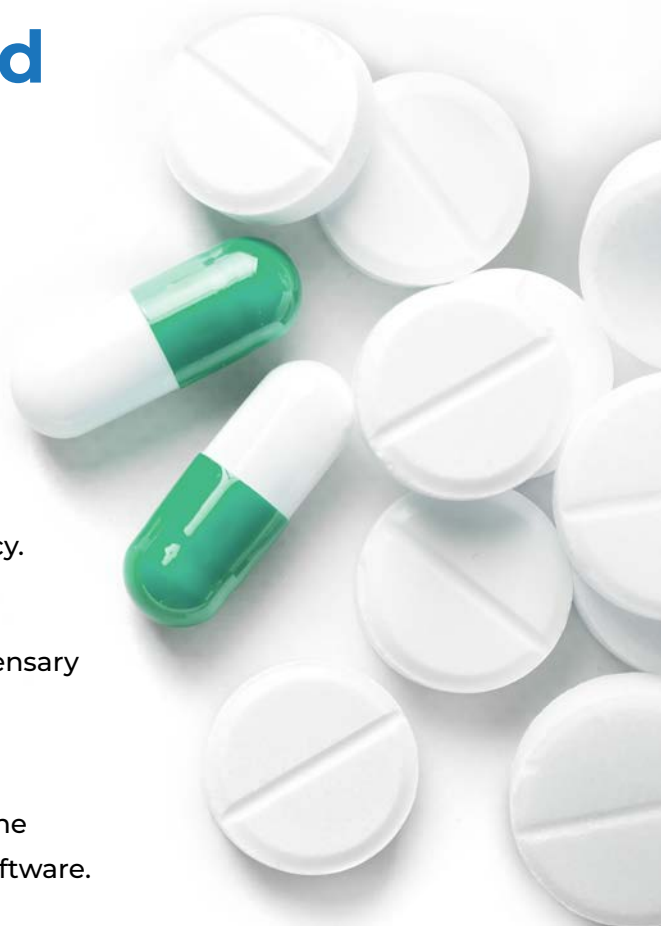
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