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STORIE

Healthengine script deal

USERS of the Healthengine medical appointment booking platform will now be offered free, same-day prescription delivery through a new partnership with Chemist2U, which earlier this year expanded its footprint across the country (PD 02 Feb).

The initiative will initially roll out in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, with additional locations expected to be added in the coming weeks, including more capital cities and major regional centres.

Healthengine noted that more than 53% of people leave their GP with a prescription in hand.

"For those in lockdown, digital natives who prefer online purchasing, and time-poor people as well as people with lack of transportation, this new solution delivers convenience and time savings, along with the needed medication," the company said.

"As telehealth use increases, script delivery plays an important role in closing the virtual journey as the patient sees the doctor online, receives an e-script, and is now able to have the prescription fulfilled and delivered without leaving the house."

The new script delivery option is

accessed via the Healthengine app or through healthengine.com.au, with Chemist2U's growing network of local community pharmacies used to fulfil the orders.

Healthengine CEO Marcus Tan said "as we help people navigate their healthcare, we're excited about offering a new service that supports Healthengine users after they leave their doctor with a paper prescription or e-script in hand".

"With Chemist2U we're now able to support another part of the Healthengine user's healthcare journey, and help people post-appointment through script delivery," Tan added.

Healthengine boasts more than 3.6m users connecting with over 7,400 Australian healthcare providers including GPs, dentists, allied health practitioners, medical specialists and pharmacies.

Matthew Cullen, Chemist2U CEO, said the company was delighted to be partnering with Healthengine via its national network of community pharmacies.

"This partnership is a natural extension of Chemist2U's vision to help make the customer experience with pharmacy both more digital and convenient," he said.



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Vic vax blunder

A GP clinic in suburban Melbourne has confirmed that up to 30 of its patients were accidentally injected with saline rather than the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

Deerpene Surgery issued a statement advising that empty vials were inadvertently mixed with unused vaccine vials before being diluted with saline, meaning some doses administered contained saline only, rather than the vaccine.

"As a result, 30 people may or may not have received Pfizer but only an injection of saline," the practice said.

The error occurred on Sun 26 Sep and impacted patients attending for vaccination appointments between 1pm and 1.30pm.

As soon as the mistake was detected the surgery advised authorities and contacted impacted patient to offer them replacement doses.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

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Blooms launches RAT drive-through

BLOOMS the Chemist will this week launch an Australian-first drive-through rapid antigen testing (RAT) facility for all local businesses operating within Sydney's Randwick Local Government Area.

The facility, located inside a shopping centre car park, is a "convenient and fast service for small businesses in the local community to get staff tested using rapid antigen tests, another important tool in the fight to suppress COVID-19 as Sydney begins to emerge from lockdown," the company said.

The initiative is being launched in partnership with Pharma Soul, the wholesaler providing the TGA-approved Testsealabs COVID-19 Antigen Test Cassette - a fast diagnostic test which detects the presence of viral protein from SARS-CoV-2.

Rohit Uppal, pharmacist from Blooms the Chemist Royal Randwick, said "we're very mindful that small businesses have been doing it tough these past few months".

"The rapid antigen tests can bring immediate peace of mind for business owners, especially those reopening, to have confidence that their team will be safe at work regardless of their vaccination status," Uppal said.



"This risk of further business disruption with positive staff cases is something every small business wants to avoid.

"These rapid antigen tests meet the urgent need for accurate, reliable and early detection of COVID-19, providing an important tool to ensure staff members have not contracted the virus.

"Capturing those instances early may mean a business can remain open, which is critical," he said.

Pharma Soul's Stephanie Golman said "we're confident this drive-through will be a huge success that can then be replicated elsewhere".

"Pharmacists are such a trusted

part of so many local communities, and we're delighted to be helping them make rapid antigen tests available and keep people safe."

The RAT drive-through will operate 6.30am-9.30am Mon-Sat, with business owners able to book testing times for their staff.

A registered nurse conducts the test, and clients then move into a designated waiting bay for 15 minutes after which they are presented with their result.

A positive test will see the patient directed to a COVID-19 testing centre for a PCR screening.

It's recommended employees be tested 2-3 times a week.



Guild Update

NDIS Partnership

CONCERNS over access to COVID vaccinations for disability scheme participants have been tackled head-on in a formal partnership between the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

The new deal makes it quick and easy to access vaccinations through community pharmacies, empowering participants to choose who, where and when for their booking.

The action parallels arrival of Moderna stocks as a new option from pharmacies. Guild President Trent Twomey said the Guild/NDIA partnership would boost community safety but also propel the nation faster towards a full reopening under the national plan.

NDIS participants aged 18 and over who are eligible for Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines are encouraged to make an informed choice, including discussion with their health professional, ahead of booking their preferred vaccine.

Separately, TGA head Adjunct Professor John Skerrett will be a guest at a Pharmacy Guild members' webinar on 6 October.

Nomegestrol/chlormadinone review

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) has launched a review of medicines containing the active substance nomegestrol or chlormadinone.

The review was requested by the French medicines agency (ANSM) in the light of new data from two epidemiological studies in women taking these

medicines to investigate the risk of meningioma, a tumour of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.

The data suggested the risk of meningioma increases with dose and duration of treatment, with the EMA looking at the evidence with a view to possibly amending EU marketing authorisations.

Mayne director

MAYNE Pharma Group has announced the appointment of Carolyn Myers as a Director.

US-based Myers was nominated by Mayne Pharma's 9.6% shareholder, Mithra Pharmaceuticals SA, as required under a deal to commercialise the Nextstellis oral contraceptive in the USA.



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Dispensary Corner

SOMETIMES the cure can be worse than the original ailment.

That's definitely the experience of a Lithuanian man, who bizarrely turned to swallowing metallic items in an attempt to quit alcohol.

The patient was taken to hospital after complaining of severe abdominal pain, with an X-ray indicating a large mass of nails, screws, nuts and bolts within his body.

Emergency surgery saw more than 1kg of metalwork removed, according to local news site *LRT*.

The man had apparently been only eating the high-mineral diet for about a month, scoffing a nail or two each time he had a craving for a drink.



Vic vax mandate

PHARMACY staff in Victoria will be required to have been vaccinated against COVID-19, under new public health orders requiring all people who work in a health care setting to be immunised.

The order applies to community pharmacy, hospitals, general practice and more, with workers required to have received their first dose of the vaccine by 15 Oct, and by 26 Nov for dose two, according to an update from Vic Premier Daniel Andrews.

The wide-ranging mandate also includes child protection workers, education providers, post office staff, restaurant and cafe workers, commercial cleaners and pet groomers.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) welcomed the move with PSA Vic Branch President John Jackson saying ensuring pharmacy staff are vaccinated is a key step in ensuring protection for the community.

The PSA called on state and territory governments to mandate COVID-19 jabs for all health workers including those in community pharmacies.

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New PSA vaping guidelines

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has released new guidelines and education to support Australian pharmacists through the transition of liquid nicotine for vaping to a prescription-only substance.

The rescheduling became effective last Fri 01 Oct, with PSA Manager, Practice Support Claire Antrobus noting that "when nicotine vaping products are prescribed under the Authorised Prescriber Scheme or the Special Access Scheme they can be dispensed through local pharmacies".

"As a result of these legislative changes, we are likely to see patients presenting to pharmacies, to access nicotine vaping products via prescription," she said.

The guidelines have been developed alongside the TGA, Quit Victoria, the RACGP, the Pharmacy Guild, the Royal Australian and NZ College of Psychiatrists and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

"These guidelines outline the pharmacist's role in providing smoking cessation support and key requirements for dispensing nicotine vaping products, including counselling and safety



considerations," Antrobus said.

Currently there are no nicotine vaping products registered on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods, so access to the unapproved items must come via the Special Access Scheme, Authorised Prescriber Scheme or Personal Importation Scheme pathways.

Two PSA education modules to support pharmacists are now available in collaboration with Quit Victoria at my.psa.org.au, while the full *Guidelines for Pharmacists Providing Smoking Cessation Support* can be accessed by **CLICKING HERE**.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has also updated its Stop Smoking Guidelines to support the transition - see racgp.org.au.

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