

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news and a full page from Sigma Healthcare.

## New episode

MICHAEL Minter, a paramedic, pharmacist and diabetes educator who was named TerryWhite Chemmart's 2020 Pharmacist of the Year, is featured in the latest episode of the Raven's Recruitment Your Pharmacy Career Podcast. To listen **CLICK HERE**.

## APP travel deals

THE organisers of next year's Australian Pharmacy Professional (APP) conference have highlighted cheap flights on offer for travel to the Gold Coast in Mar 2022, including Jetstar fares from Sydney starting at \$39 one way.

Special accommodation rates have also been negotiated with a range of Broadbeach hotels and apartments, with delegates invited to extend their stay and "turn APP into a mini holiday" - **DETAILS HERE**.

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# Exposure rules eased

**VACCINATED** pharmacists and pharmacy staff wearing masks who are exposed to COVID-19 may no longer have to quarantine, under new guidelines announced by the Federal Department of Health.

Individual states and territories still have to formally adopt the advice, which will simplify incidents where patients who attend a pharmacy are subsequently diagnosed with the infection.

A matrix of conditions lays out requirements for low, low-to-moderate, moderate and high risk scenarios, each with new testing and isolation requirements.

For example, a pharmacy staff member wearing a surgical mask who has transient face-to-face contact with a confirmed case, or non-transient distanced contact in an indoor space, can be classed at the worst case as "moderate risk" which under the new guidelines would require them to isolate until a day two PCR test.

If that test is negative they can then return to work, but must have another test on day five and on day 13 and be alert for symptoms.

A high risk scenario involving non-transient face-to-face contact with a confirmed case still requires staff to leave the workplace immediately and isolate as a primary close contact, but with the potential to return to work early if a day five PCR test result is negative.

The Department of Health said "the framework recognises that workers in healthcare settings who are vaccinated for COVID-19 are less likely to acquire infection and, if infected, are less likely to transmit COVID-19 to others".

"Previous requirements to furlough workers in healthcare settings following exposure to COVID-19 could result in significant impacts on health system capacity and place a significant strain on the delivery of health services."

The new rules are at [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au).



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API ACC NAME	DATE
SIGMA ACC NAME	DATE
CH2 ACC NAME	DATE

## New app makes finding locums easier

A NEW online platform helping pharmacies and locums to connect with each other has started rolling out in Vic, with plans for national expansion over the coming months.

The company behind the initiative is named Locumate, and was co-founded by pharmacist Kavita Nadan and IT expert Surge Singh, with pharmacies able to utilise the system to post available vacancies.

Locums can use the Locumate app to browse for work opportunities, view schedules and submit invoices, with Nadan saying "Locumate has the opportunity to make a

real difference to the lives of pharmacies and locums alike".

"As a pharmacist, I've had first-hand experience when it comes to looking for meaningful career opportunities, learning and developing my skills, and honing my craft," she said.

"I've also worked as a pharmacy manager, desperately wrangling last-minute locum shifts through agencies I had no control or oversight of.

"That's why we decided to start Locumate...we knew there was a better solution for locums and pharmacies," she added.

Registrations for Locumate are now open at [locumate.com.au](http://locumate.com.au).



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## Pandemic claims on hold

**THE** second business interruption case regarding insurance claims related to the COVID-19 pandemic has been completed, but pharmacies which have made a claim will need to wait until yet another appeal hearing to know if they are covered.

The latest Federal Court ruling which was handed down last Fri found in favour of insurers including Guild Insurance, Allianz, Chubb, IAG, QBE and Swiss Re.

Giuseppe Carollo, CEO of pharmacy insurance specialist Carollo Horton, said the ruling meant "many insurance policies are unlikely to provide cover for business interruption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic".

The test case involved nine small businesses operating in various sectors and locations, with Justice Jayne Jagot saying other than in one case (relating to IAG and a travel agency called Meridian Travel) "I have concluded that the insuring clauses do not apply in the circumstances of each case".

Carollo said frustration at the lack of certainty around the delayed decisions was understandable.

"Once insurers have the final rulings, they will be consistently applied when assessing a claim for business interruption related to the COVID-19 pandemic and claims will be made a priority," he said.



"Due to pharmacies being able to trade throughout most of the pandemic with some restrictions, the claim will need to be assessed not only against the policy but also around certain circumstances and how the pharmacy traded during the period," Carollo added.

"Your insurance broker should guide you through this process.

"Pharmacies play an important role in the communities they serve, and especially now during the pandemic....some pharmacies have been more affected than others, so each claim for business interruption needs to be transparent and consistent," he said.

The new appeal is expected in early Nov, and pharmacies which have made a claim will need to wait until the final appeal to know if they are fully covered.

## Cannabis scripts at an all time high

**MORE** than 13,600 Australian patients accessed medical cannabis in the last month, with data from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) confirming medicinal cannabis prescriptions are at an all time high.

Over the 12 month period to 30 Sep 2021 the TGA has approved more than 104,000 Special Access Scheme (SAS) Category B applications for unapproved medicinal cannabis products - in addition to scripts for Sativex (nabiximols) and Epidyolex (cannabidiol) which are listed in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG).

SAS applications have been approved for a range of conditions including chemotherapy-induced nausea

and vomiting, cancer pain, neuropathic pain, palliative care conditions, refractory paediatric epilepsy, spasticity from neurological conditions, and anorexia and wasting associated with chronic illness.

The vast majority of medical cannabis prescriptions were for chronic pain, with the largest age cohort being people aged 18-44.

Oil was the most common dosage form, followed by solution and then oral liquid, and the majority of prescribers were located in Queensland (90,000) followed by NSW (37,000), Vic (33,000), WA (11,000), SA (1,500) and the ACT (785).

SAS B applications allow health practitioners to access items not included on the ARTG.

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## Win with Crampeze

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## Dispensary Corner

**CANNABIS** may be legal in some parts of the USA, but officials in Florida are still definitely saying no to drugs.

A sheriff has placed a tongue-in-cheek post on social media advertising about 300kg of marijuana in hopes of "finding its rightful owner".

The stash was seized from a self-storage facility in the town of Viera, part of Brevard County.

Posting an image of the "missing" weed (below), Sheriff Wayne Ivey wrote "I mean, trying to identify the rightful owner of the property is the very least we can do, especially since it has a street value of roughly two million dollars!!"

Once identified, we can "also make sure that both you and your property are kept in a secure area so that no one can try to rip you off," he said.

Ivey, who has a reputation as "the most politically incorrect sheriff in the country" also offered what he described as a "staycation" (presumably in the local penitentiary) to allow the owner to "think about exactly how much your lost property means to you".

The Brevard County Sheriff also has a YouTube channel where he runs a regular "Wheel of Fugitive" segment to highlight the "fugitive of the week".



## New eNRMC resources

**THE** Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has released two new documents providing key guidance for the implementation of electronic National Residential Medication Charts (eNRMCs).

The Commission was engaged by the Department of Health to develop the resources, which include a guide for residential care facilities which wish to transition from a paper-based or hybrid electronic medication management system to an eNRMC system.

"In addition to supporting electronic prescribing of medicines for consumers in residential care facilities, eNRMC systems have a number of other potential advantages and opportunities for streamlining medication management," the Commission said.

Also available is a new guide to support software vendors to optimise the safety and quality features of their eNRMC systems.

eNRMC platforms support electronic prescribing for supply of both PBS/RPBS and non-PBS medicines, as well as ordering the items, for the purpose of administering medicines to consumers living in residential care facilities, with PBS regulations changing in 2019 to support the use of electronic prescriptions in these settings.

Providers of eNRMC systems must contain all functionality to support users to comply with state and territory legislation, as well as national laws and PBS requirements.

The new documents are available for free download at [safetyandquality.gov.au](http://safetyandquality.gov.au).

## UK COVID bonus

**ABOUT** 6,000 UK-based pharmacy staff working at the Well Pharmacy group will receive a one-off COVID-19 "recognition payment", with the bonus aiming to celebrate their work and persistence through the pandemic.

Pharmacists and pharmacy team leaders will each get £150, while other UK frontline staff and warehouse employees will be awarded £100, with trade paper *Chemist+Druggist* noting it was the second time bonuses had been awarded by Well Pharmacy Group since the onset of COVID-19.

Well Pharmacy is the UK's third largest pharmacy chain, with over 750 branches across the country.

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