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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus full pages from

- UTS
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Moderna boost for Tasmania

COMMUNITY pharmacies across Tasmania are playing a key role in boosting the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, as the island state emerges from a three-day lockdown.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Tasmanian Branch President, Helen O'Byrne, noted that close to 18,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine have been administered through the State's pharmacy network in less than a month.

She added that many pharmacies were open for extended hours and over the weekend to improve access to the vaccine, and urged Tasmanians to visit their local pharmacy to discuss any questions they might have about the vaccine.

Prescription Pill fails Aussie women

PLANS to maintain the current Prescription-Only status of the oral contraceptive pill demonstrates a failure of common sense, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National Councillor, Natalie Willis, believes.

Willis described the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling (ACMS) interim decision not to down-schedule oral contraceptives to Pharmacist-Only, as an insult to women.

"It's a sad moment for women in Australia," she said.

"Allowing pharmacies to sell the pill in certain situations would take the pressure off GPs and increase its accessibility for women.

"It's merely improving convenience for women to the same level as men, who can pop down to the shops and take care of their contraceptive needs very easily, whereas women have to jump through all these hoops.

"Rather than making a sensible and progressive decision in the interests of women, this interim decision is a retreat into the safety of the status quo. This has simply shelved an issue of great importance for women's health."

Willis said the interim decision



was "holding back the entire health system in this country, creating unnecessary costs to the taxpayer, placing an undue burden on GPs who are already struggling to cope with demand and inconveniencing patients by denying them easier access to quality healthcare".

"It is recognised as being within a pharmacist's scope of practice to be able to assess a patient's suitability for treatment and provide counselling on medicines, including indication, correct use, dosage, adverse effects, contraindications, precautions, and when to seek further medical advice," she said.

"Pharmacists have demonstrated this ability in relation to oral contraceptives with the supply of levonorgestrel for emergency post-coital contraception, which was rescheduled by the TGA as a S3 medicine in 2004.

"We now have a situation where the morning after pill can be purchased over the counter, but a contraceptive pill will continue to require a prescription."

Willis added that despite being the second country in the world to legalise the Pill, in 1961, Australia has lagged behind others, including New Zealand in making it available without a prescription.

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Dispensary Corner

KNOWN for its murals commemorating Northern Ireland's troubled past, some local "artists" have decided to use their "talents" to daub intimidating anti-vaccination propaganda outside a pharmacy in Lenadoon in West Belfast.

The ill-informed and threatening messages were posted around the store last Tue night, and have been condemned by local councillor, Arder Carson.

"There can be absolutely no place in our society for the intimidation of health workers or members of the public when accessing their local pharmacy," he said.

"Attempts to intimidate staff and members of the public with graffiti and posters at a community pharmacy in the Lenadoon area are completely unacceptable."

The graffiti incident followed an anti-vax protest outside a pop-up vaccination clinic in Belfast earlier this month, during which staff were verbally abused, *Belfast Live* reported.

The protesters were also alleged to have filmed and photographed patients and staff at the clinic.



EBOS plots TWC growth

PHARMACY wholesaler, EBOS Group, aims to add another 35 stores to its TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) franchise by Jun 2022.

Addressing the company's virtual annual general meeting today, EBOS CEO, John Cullity, said the TWC network had performed strongly in the 2021 financial year, expanding by a net 36 stores.

"TWC is Australia's largest health services community pharmacy with over 465 trading stores," he said.

"We have a target of 500 trading stores by Jun 2022."

Cullity noted that the TWC network's sales demonstrated above-market growth at 5.3%, and on a like-for-like basis, increased by 3.6%.

"This performance was driven by continued investment in media spend and ongoing industry-leading pharmacist education programs," he said.

In addition to increased sales growth, Cullity told the AGM that the number of TWC stores participating in Australia's



COVID-19 vaccination program has continued to increase since the FY21 results were announced two months ago (*PD* 18 Aug).

"Over 350 TWC pharmacies across Australia are now supporting their communities and delivering in-store COVID-19 vaccinations [up from 300 in Aug]," he said.

"This essential community service flows on from TWC's leading position in administering flu vaccinations."

Pharmacy Guild Update

School vaccination program Qld

A NEW onsite school vaccination program is now underway in Queensland.

Similar to existing school-based vaccine programs, the FNQ COVID-19 School Vaccination Program empowers community pharmacies to deliver vaccination services to students aged 12 and above in the familiar environment of their own school.

At the launch, Pharmacy Guild National President, Trent Twomey, endorsed legislative changes allowing community pharmacists to expand their services to onsite school clinics.

As with other common vaccination programs for children under the age of consent, parental or guardian approval is captured in advance.

Health assessments are undertaken for participating students to provide both vaccinator and patient with the assurances required, and for post-vaccination observation and care.

The program has been built by the Pharmacy Guild Queensland Branch with support from the Queensland Department of Health.

The program is a useful adjunct to vaccinations for all eligible Australians available through the www.findapharmacy.com.au website.

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