

Today's issue of PD

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

- MOR Boutique
- Sigma Healthcare

Something Mor

MOR Boutique is launching its new Marshmallow Petals collection with a special discount offer.

See **page three** for more.

TGA takes action

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has initiated proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia against Medtronic Australasia in relation to the unlawful supply of its Infuse Bone Graft Kit, without a metallic spinal infusion cage, in line with its approval on the ARTG.

Fund OTC naloxone: PSA

CURRENT measures designed to improve access to naloxone are failing to deliver to those most at risk of overdose, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, believes.

Marking International Overdose Awareness Day yesterday, Freeman called for reforms to reduce costs by enabling pharmacists to supply subsidised doses of the treatment without a prescription.

"Naloxone is a life-saving medicine that can temporarily reverse opioid overdose, allowing enough time for an ambulance to arrive," he said.

"Whilst it is now available over the counter across the country, the price of this medicine puts it out of reach for many, and a prescription is required in order to receive the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) subsidy.

"The current process is simply not working in the best interests of those who need it most.



"Whilst we welcome short-term trials to improve access in NSW, Western Australia, and South Australia, this does not go far enough.

"We need to improve access to this life-saving medicine through all pharmacies across all jurisdictions, by making it the first pharmacist-initiated and supplied PBS item - in doing so, we can decrease the amount of deaths from overdose.

"Pharmacists are Australia's most accessible healthcare workforce, now is the time to act to make naloxone not only more easily accessible, but affordable - something that will see countless lives saved in Australia."

New CEO for NPS

ROYAL Far West Executive Director of Strategy, Services and Innovation, Katherine Burchfield, has been appointed as NPS MedicineWise's new CEO.

Burchfield will take the reins on 18 Oct, succeeding Adjunct Associate Professor Steve Morris, who stepped down from the role in Jul after less than three years at the helm.

Announcing the appointment, NPS MedicineWise Chair, Dr Andrew Knight, said Burchfield was extremely well placed to lead the organisation and continue its efforts to support the quality use of medicines under a refreshed National Medicines Policy.

"Katherine has a strong track record in leading complex portfolios and multi-disciplinary teams," Knight said.

"She is passionate about improving health systems and addressing health inequalities."

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Dispensary Corner

PROTESTS and threatening letters are not the only issues facing pharmacist immunisers around the world as they support COVID-19 vaccination campaigns.

While anti-vaxxers have posed a challenge for some, pharmacists in the US are now having to deal with overly keen vaccine enthusiasts who have been attempting to land a third dose of their preferred shot.

US broadcaster, *ABC News*, revealed that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that close to 1.1 million people have slipped below the radar to score an unauthorised Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine booster.

Fox 59 reported that pharmacists in Arkansas have had patients lie about their vaccine status in an effort to secure an extra dose, with one pharmacist, Carl Collier, saying old friends were "schmoozing him" in an effort to secure an extra shot.

"[They're saying] 'hey buddy remember in high school when we were... yeah and how about another dose?'" he said.



PPA launches employment survey

EMPLOYEE pharmacists' union, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) is launching its bi-annual Pharmacists Employment and Remuneration Survey today.

The organisation aims to survey more than 29,000 employee pharmacists, with PPA President, Dr Geoff March, saying the data collected would be critical to helping lift wages and improve conditions in the sector, reporting that the 2019 survey had supported the union in securing cumulative increases to the Pharmacy Industry Award totalling 24.5% over the last three years.

"The Pharmacists Employment and Remuneration Survey provides comprehensive information on the wages and conditions Australia's pharmacists receive," he said.

"This information is absolutely vital in campaigning for wage increases and improvements to working conditions for pharmacists who have demonstrated how essential they are to providing community

healthcare, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"That's why we're calling on all pharmacists to complete this important survey and make their voices heard."

March said the COVID-19 pandemic has created further challenges for the profession.

"Pharmacists remain the lowest paid health professionals and lowest paid graduates in Australia," he said.

"Many pharmacists are overworked and underpaid and as a result their mental health is suffering.

"These issues have only been exacerbated by the stress of continuing to operate throughout the pandemic and the increased workloads for pharmacists involved in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

"That's why PPA is donating \$1 to the Pharmacists Support Service for every pharmacist that completes the survey.

"When pharmacists complete the



survey, they'll not only be providing important information which will be used to improve their own wages and conditions, they'll be directly supporting their fellow pharmacists in need."

With pharmacy graduates reporting the lowest rates of pay of any health profession in Australia, March said the data collected from the survey would be used to campaign to boost wages ahead of the Fair Work Commissions upcoming graduate pay review.

DoH announces IDAA claim extension

PHARMACIES that are registered for the Indigenous Dose Administration Aid (IDAA) Program will have until 31 Oct to submit claims for services provided in Jul or Aug in specific circumstances.

The Commonwealth Department of Health (DoH) announced the extension could only be used for services that could not be claimed within normal claiming timeframes due to issues in gaining patient consent, the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) reported.

"If you were not able to claim within the standard timeframe for any other reason you should



instead follow the usual process to submit an exceptional circumstances claim," the PPA said.

"Service providers who have registered for the IDAA Program in the PPA Portal will receive an email with further information later in the week."

EBOS expansion

THE parent company of pharmacy wholesaler, Symbion, is continuing its expansion, with EBOS announcing its acquisition of medical consumables distributor, Sentry Medical.

The deal flagged in EBOS's 2021 Financial Year results last month is expected to "further strengthen EBOS's presence in the distribution of medical consumables to the institutional healthcare market", the company said.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange EBOS noted the acquisition was its fourth in the last 12 months.



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