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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Ivermectin script restrictions: TGA

SUPPLY shortages and concerns over potential misuse of oral ivermectin have prompted the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to place restrictions on prescribing.

The TGA has announced that GPs may only prescribe ivermectin for "TGA-approved conditions - scabies and certain parasitic infections", while certain specialists will be authorised to prescribe it for unapproved indications, due to concerns that the medication was being prescribed off-label for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19.

Announcing the restrictions, the TGA noted there had been "a three- to four-fold increased dispensing of ivermectin in recent months, leading to national and local shortages for those who need the medicine".

Govt accelerates Moderna rollout

COMMUNITY pharmacy's COVID-19 vaccination campaign is set for a boost with 1,800 stores to receive doses of the Moderna vaccine by the end of the week.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, told *Pharmacy Daily* that plans to roll out the vaccine to 1,200 pharmacies a week over the next three weeks were accelerated after the Federal Government reached a deal with the European Union for an additional million doses.

"The Minister for Trade [Dan Tehan], with the Prime Minister [Scott Morrison] and the Health Minister [Greg Hunt] have been able to secure an extra million Moderna vaccines for Australians to be distributed through community pharmacies, which means instead of 10 million Moderna doses arriving this calendar year there will be 11 million," Twomey said.

"And instead of one million arriving this month there will be two million.

"The other thing the Guild has been able to negotiate with the Prime Minister and the Health Minister is that there will be an accelerated rollout.



"So instead of three tranches of 1,200 [pharmacies being on-boarded], there will now be two tranches of 1,800, bringing us up to 3,600 pharmacies."

Twomey added that the Guild wanted to encourage pharmacy owners who have not signed up to participate in the program to apply, noting that challenges related to the concerns about the AstraZeneca vaccine were not an issue for the Moderna shot.

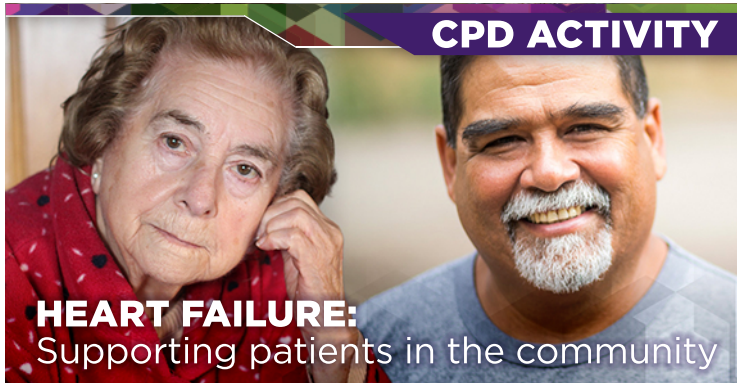
"We'd really love to have 4,000 pharmacies participating by the end of the month," he said.

"There has been hesitancy around the AstraZeneca vaccine, but there is no need to be hesitant around the Moderna vaccine.

"It's the mRNA technology, it has a similar - if not better - safety profile, and a similar - if not better - efficacy profile than Pfizer, it's approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for all Australians 12 years of age and older.

"So demand for this vaccine is going to significantly outpace and outstrip the demand that we've seen to date for AstraZeneca."

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Dispensary Corner

WITH COVID-19 the madness never stops, as some people desperately search for miracle cures and prevention, while refusing to be immunised with regulator-approved vaccines.

With ivermectin the current drug of choice for those unwilling to follow the advice of health authorities around the globe, Ireland's Health Service Executive (HSE) has reported a 3,000% increase in the number of units of unauthorised imports of ivermectin in the 12 months to 21 Jul.

Authorities from the Emerald Isle noted that the seized supplies were predominantly in formulations used for deworming horses, and classified as for "personal use".

In an effort to encourage people not to needlessly endanger themselves, pharmacist, Peter Conroy, told *TheJournal.ie* that the horse formulation was significantly stronger than human preparations, and could lead to users suffering inflammation of the brain and liver toxicity.

"If you take any medication that anybody is being prescribed and multiplied the dose by six or 10, there is going to be a long list of side effects," he said.

"Your liver has to detoxify this. I say trust your doctor and stick to medication which is prescribed for you.

"Listen to the professionals and not something on the internet."

We'd say it's definitely time to stop horsing around with miracle cures.

Labor backs full scope

PHARMACISTS should be working "at the top end" of their scope of practice to boost healthcare outcomes in Australia, Federal Opposition Leader, Anthony Albanese, believes.

Speaking during a Pharmacy Guild of Australia webinar last week, the Labor leader noted the positive impact that community pharmacies have made since being activated to administer COVID-19 vaccines, and backed the profession to do more.

"Pharmacists can work to their full scope of practise without duplicating or splitting care," he said.

"Pharmacists are highly trained experts, who offer incredible services to their community, and we want you working at the top end of your scope of practise.

"In some areas, particularly in the regions, the pharmacist might be the most accessible, or indeed the only healthcare professional, and that's a point that should

never be forgotten.

"In aged care pharmacists can and should play an important role as well, and [Shadow Health Minister] Mark Butler will work with you on the response to the Aged Care Royal Commission - there's been some positive things done, but there is so much more that needs to be done."

Albanese noted that once the COVID-19 pandemic passes "older challenges will still be waiting", highlighting concerns over medicines affordability as one issue that needs to be tackled.

While not committing to the Guild's call for the general Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) co-payment to be cut by 50%, Albanese said it was "certainly something that needs to be addressed", with one-in-five Australians "being forced to make decisions like whether they should pay the rent, buy groceries... or buy their prescription medicines".

ACCC green-lights NPSA collaboration

PHARMACEUTICAL wholesalers will be able to continue to collaborate with each other to support "fair and efficient access to essential medications" under an interim authorisation granted by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) this morning.

The move will allow the National Pharmaceutical Services Association to negotiate with the Federal Government on behalf of Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers in relation to possible COVID-19 vaccination distribution arrangements, ACCC Chair, Rod Sims, said.

"Australia is still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic including the growing impact of the Delta strain, so it remains in the public interest to allow pharmacy wholesalers to work together to ensure people continue to have access to critical medicines during times of high demand," he said.

"The ACCC interim authorisation will facilitate pharmacy wholesalers entering into discussions and arrangements for the distribution of the vaccines to pharmacies to meet demand as well as to ensure minimal waste of the available vaccine."

Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Kristina Fox, 2021 Pharmacist of the Year Finalist, TerryWhite Chemmart Rosny Park, TAS**



What does trust look like to a community pharmacist?

THE key goal of any health professional, including pharmacists, is to deliver better health outcomes for our patients and community - trust is a critical component to achieving this goal.

What does trust look like to a community pharmacist? Patients waiting extended times (or coming back later) to see you personally and get your advice. Patients passing multiple pharmacies so they can come to you. Patients asking your opinion on advice they have received from other health professionals. Patients willing to discuss symptoms/ issues with you that may have an associated stigma. Patients coming to you when they are at their lowest and need support.

How does having the trust of my patients make me feel? Having the trust of my patients is a privilege and motivator. It gives me confidence that I do have a positive impact on my patients' health outcomes. It drives me to be more innovative and further support the needs of our community.

#WPD2021



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EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper
Editor – Nicholas O'Donoghue
Contributors – Adam Bishop, Myles Stedman
info@pharmacydaily.com.au

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Sean Harrigan, Hoda Alzubaidi
advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

BUSINESS MANAGER

Jenny Piper
accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
 Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
 PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
 Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

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