

Tue 30th August 2022

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# Workforce needs action not thanks

AUSTRALIA'S pharmacy workforce needs urgent investment to boost capacity to meet the demands of the nation's health systems, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Dr Fei Sim helieves

Commenting on Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese's address to the National Press Club yesterday, during which he thanked health workers for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, Sim said, "the sector needs leadership and action, not more thanks".

"If working conditions do not improve across the board, the expertise of pharmacists will become inaccessible to our communities," Sim warned.

"We need leadership from the Federal Government to keep pharmacists on the ground delivering frontline healthcare and medicine safety.

"The Federal Government needs to invest in a whole of profession workforce strategy, working with



pharmacists and peak bodies to create attractive and rewarding careers."

Sim noted that the PSA had not been invited to the Prime Minister's Jobs and Skills Summit later this week, and that the pharmacy sector had been overlooked at Minister for

#### Today's issue of *PD*

**Pharmacy Daily** today features three pages of news, plus a full page from Biogency.



Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler's Health Workforce Summit.

Sim has previously called for an increase to the Pharmacy Industry Award 2020, saying "remuneration has a direct tie to our workforce capacity issues" (PD 03 Aug).



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🐪 Selima<sup>,</sup>



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# NSW extends free RAT program

**CONCESSION** cardholders in NSW will continue to retain access to free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs) until the end of Oct, under the State Government's extended program.

The updated scheme, announced yesterday by Minister for Customer Services and Digital Government, Victor Dominello, will provide eligible individuals with up to 10 free RATs, distributed through Service NSW Centres in addition to more than 200 neighbourhood and community centres across the state.

However, the program will not use the state's community pharmacy network to provide access to free RATs.

"Although we are heading out of winter, the risk of COVID-19 remains and we want to ensure RATs are easily accessible for pensioners and concession card holders," Dominello said.

"We are committed to supporting our local communities and helping to drive down the cost of living



where we can for vulnerable people."

NSW Minister for Families and Communities and Minister for Disability Services, Natasha MacLaren-Jones, said the extension of the program highlighted the Government's commitment to protecting vulnerable people.

"This roll-out is part of the NSW Government's program to provide

millions of free rapid antigen tests to ensure they are readily available to support our state's most vulnerable," she said.

"Eligible customers need to show Service NSW staff their Commonwealth concession cards at any one of our 113 Service Centres, four Mobile Service Centres or Disaster Recovery Centres across the State."

# PharmXchange to fuel growth

PHARMACY software provider, Corum Group's PharmXchange platform will provide "a great springboard for accelerated growth", Executive Chair, Nick England, believes.

Announcing the firm recorded a \$1.1 million underlying net profit after tax for the year to 30 Jun, England said the company was "extremely pleased" with the "market reaction and initial uptake" of PharmXchange, since its launch in Jun (PD 22 Jun), with 20 suppliers - including Haleon and Ravlon - and 100 pharmacies using the system.

England added that the company had recommenced its search for a new CEO having temporarily paused the recruitment process pending a review of the business structure.

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#### Dispensary Corner

**THE** Shoop Shoop Song said "if it's love, if it really is - it's in his kiss".

However, health experts are warning young lovers to look their sexual partners in the eye if they really want to know, if they have any sexually transmitted infections, before letting their passion takeover.

UK-based pharmacist, Abbas Kanani, from Chemist Click, told *Dublin Live*, that eye discharge can be a sign of genital herpes, and a warning to use protection.

"Irritation, pain, swelling and discharge usually affects one eye only," Kanani said.

"It does not usually cause any changes to vision, or any notable pain in the affected eye.

"If you experience either of these, you should see your doctor or optician for an examination."

Kanani noted that the sudden onset of itchy, scratchy eyes could be associated with chlamydia in the eye, which can be contracted when the eye comes directly into contact with the genital fluid of the infected individual.

Irish sexual health consultant, Dr Aisling Loy, noted that cases of gonorrhoea and syphilis have soared in the Emerald Isle this year as a result of people "mixing post pandemic".



# Strahan lands finals spot

TASMANIA'S Strahan Pharmacy is in the running to claim the Australian Small Business Champion Awards' Pharmacy of the Year crown at a ceremony in Sydney this weekend.

The store has been listed as one of the seven category finalists against odds, with the pharmacy facing significant challenges following the death of its owner, Mark Fletcher, last year (*PD* 10 Aug).

Since Fletcher's passing, his wife, Julie Fletcher - who is not a registered pharmacist - has been operating the town's only pharmacy in a caretaker capacity, while attempting to find a buyer for the business.

In an effort to ensure patients in Strahan retain access to pharmacy services, Julie has relied on securing the services of locum pharmacists to keep the pharmacy's doors open.

However, she had recently had to close the store for a number of days, after her efforts to access support through the Rural Locum Assistance Program (RLAP) were rejected, because she is not a registered pharmacist.

The Australian Small Business



Champion Awards' Pharmacy of the Year will be presented at The Star, Sydney as part of the National Presentation event on Fri 02 and Sat 03 Sep.

The full list of finalists in the Pharmacy category are:

- Cincotta Discount Pharmacy, Stocklands Merrylands.
- Meds Direct Pharmacy, Merrylands.
- Mt Colah Pharmacy and Post
  Office
- TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) Milton Pharmacy.
- TWC Plumpton.
- West Pymble Pharmacy.
- Strahan Pharmacy.

# **R** Guild Update

#### Pharmacy Connect only two days away

**THERE'S** only two days to go until the community pharmacy industry comes together for Pharmacy Connect in Sydney being held from 1-3 September.

The conference includes two pre-conference workshops, two days of educational sessions, over 30 speakers and a sold-out trade exhibition with 50-plus exhibitors.

It is open to pharmacists, pharmacy owners, pharmacy group executives, pharmacy managers and staff, pharmacy interns, pharmacy students, and industry representatives.

Pharmacy Connect is your opportunity to network, upskill and have fun in the second half of the year.

Attendees will hear from the likes of Peter Baines OAM, Strategic Advisor on leadership matters; Besa Deda, Westpac's Westpac Business Bank's Chief Economist on the new trends shaping the way we live; and Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and the only pharmacist in the Federal Government.

Time is running out to register for Pharmacy Connect. Click here to secure your registration.

Walk-in registrations are also available.

## Plastic contamination prompts recall

**CONCERNS** about possible plastic contamination has prompted respiratory machines manufacturer, Philips, to extend its global recall to a total of 1,700 devices.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said that if the plastic is in the device motor of Philips bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) machines, it could release chemicals of concerns, *Reuters* reported.

The action is not connected



with the recall of C-PAP, BiPAP and ventilators, announced last year because of concerns about potential risks associated with a foam part degrading and becoming toxic (*PD* 28 Jun 2021).

# Pharmacy Daily

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