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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus full pages from:

- TerryWhite Chemmart
- Gluco Beans

COVID still here

WITH new COVID-19 case numbers on the rise, Professional Pharmacists Australian (PPA) is seeking to remind employers of their obligations to staff.

In a statement, the union said employers must consult the workforce about the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace and have a plan with control measures to stop the spread of the virus.

The PPA said that workers who were members of a union were in a stronger position to secure the best possible workplace health and safety protections.

LGP takes step towards OTC CBD

MEDICINAL cannabis company, Little Green Pharma (LGP), could be the first to deliver a Schedule 3 product to the Australian market, after securing ethics approval for its Phase III SleepWell Study.

The Australian-based, multi-site, placebo-controlled trial will assess the efficacy and safety of the company's LGP Classic 50 cannabis product for stress reduction and improved quality of sleep in healthy adults.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) the company reported that if the trial is successful it will support the future registration of the cannabis oil medication as an over-the-counter (OTC) treatment.

LGP CEO, Fleta Solomon, welcomed the ethics approval.

"We are delighted to receive ethics approval for LGP's SleepWell Study, which is yet another significant achievement for the LGP team and its product and drug delivery innovation strategy,"



Solomon said.

"This represents a significant milestone for Australian patients along the pathway to ultimately accessing Australian-made CBD products at their local pharmacy OTC."

The company said the S3 CBD market was set to reach \$250 million and more than two million consumers at market maturity.

Under the current scheduling model, products containing a maximum daily dose of 150mg

of CBD can be dispensed OTC, however, there are currently no products that meet that criteria listed on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

Voicing support for the *Narcotic Drugs Amendment (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2021* in Feb 2021, Federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, said the OTC dosage was "sub-therapeutic".

"For many conditions 150mg a day simply won't do the job," Butler said.



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Queensland trio in running for PotY

QUEENSLAND pharmacies make up half the finalists for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's 2023 Pharmacy of the Year (PotY) title.

The six-store list features Queensland's Livelife Pharmacy Cooroy, Thursday Island Pharmacy and Wholelife Pharmacy and Healthfoods Pearse Street, Capital Chemist Calwell, ACT, Pharmacy 777 Shoalwater, Western Australia, and Ouyen Pharmacy, Victoria.

Guild Senior Vice President and PotY judging panel member, Nick Panayiaris said this year's nominees had set a new benchmark for community pharmacies.

"The nominations have been absolutely exceptional," he said.

"These awards have been presented for more than 20 years, but the judges all agree this year has been outstanding."

Panayiaris said that it was remarkable to see how many stores had invested in automation and other technology, which has

enabled them to make the changes necessary to grow their businesses and launch patient-centred services, while managing the impact of COVID-19.

"It was really encouraging to see how pharmacies had responded to the changed environment of COVID and adapted to meet the different patient demands and expectations," he said.

"They innovated, they pivoted, and they came up with solutions to previously unencountered clinical and business challenges."

Award sponsor, Care Pharmaceuticals General Manager, Jonathan Biddle, said the competition sought to acknowledge Australia's most innovative and adaptable pharmacies.

"They have worked under the most challenging situations to meet the needs of their patients and their community by providing comprehensive, holistic health services, medication safety and



advice, through well-managed pharmacies," he said.

"This year we had hundreds of nominations for the award.

"We are proud at Care Pharmaceuticals to sponsor this important recognition of outstanding pharmacies, and our sponsorship reflects our ongoing commitment to patients and pharmacies in the sector."

The 2023 PotY winner will be announced at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference on the Gold Coast on 23 Mar 2023.

Ozempic warning

SOCIAL media influencers and other advertisers are being warned not to promote diabetes treatment, Ozempic (semaglutide) for weight-loss, by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

In a statement released yesterday, the TGA said advertising of the prescription-only medication was "prohibited".

"Advertising to the public is a contravention of the [Therapeutic Goods] Act [1989] that can result in jail time and criminal penalties of up to \$888,000 for individuals [or] \$4.44 million for corporations, [and] civil penalties of up to \$1.11 million for individuals or \$11.1 million for corporations," the TGA said.

Nova Nordisk has previously warned that the medication was likely to be unavailable in Australia until late Mar 2023.

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Moderna's SPIKEVAX BIVALENT Original/Omicron COVID-19 vaccine has provisional approval as a booster for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2 in individuals 18 years of age and older.¹ The use of these vaccines should be in accordance with official recommendation.¹

PBS Information: This product is not listed on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) or the PBS.

▼ This vaccine is subject to additional monitoring in Australia. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse events at www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems.

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Reference: 1. Spikevax Bivalent Product Information, August 2022.



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Dispensary Corner

BRITISH pharmacy worker, Simon Hodgetts, has been caught out by his own web of lies.

The Birmingham-based 38-year-old faked a burglary at the pharmacy he worked in on 02 Mar 2021, in an effort to cover his tracks having stolen cash from the store.

Hodgetts told his manager that he had discovered the break-in when he arrived to open the store and called police.

A hearing of Birmingham Crown Court was told that while there had been some damage to the store's shutters and the door had come off it appeared that it had been done from the inside.

The Court heard that Hodgett told police that at around 7.15am there had been a knock on the door of the pharmacy and he was confronted by a man with a gun demanding to be let in, *Birmingham Live* reported.

However, he was busted when he changed his story for a third time during a police interview, with his lawyer noting his lack of consistency was his undoing.

Concerns over generics

TAINTED batches of generic lamotrigine tablets, used for treating bipolar disorder and epilepsy, are being dispensed in Australia, research from the University of NSW (UNSW) reveals.

The study published in *Australasian Psychiatry* used mass spectrometry to analyse six lamotrigine preparations distributed in Australia and two generic versions of the drug used by two patients reporting side effects.

While the analyses of the six preparations were comparable and showed no signs of compromising, the assays of the drugs taken by the two patients showed deviations in the lamotrigine concentration.

Lead author, UNSW Medicine and Health School of Clinical Medicine Scientia Professor of Psychiatry, Gordon Parker, noted that the findings did not suggest "that all generics are universally compromised".

"But our analyses do indicate some compromised lamotrigine medications are being distributed in Australia," he said.

"It's possible that being transported to Australia, they might be exposed to excessive heat or cold and may break down.

"But we suspect there are some



manufacturing sites where the product is being compromised or contaminated after receiving Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approval.

"The faulty batches likely reflect some on-site manufacturers having poor quality control processes, and the pharmaceutical companies may be quite unaware of what's going on with their manufacturers."

Parker noted that the TGA received 114 adverse event reports for lamotrigine, including four deaths, between Jan 2018 and Feb 2021, but said the regulator had yet to take action.

"This should signal a possible canary in the coal mine phenomena that the TGA should be urgently looking into," he said.

Walgreens cops workforce fines

US PHARMACY giant, Walgreens, has been hit with fines of close to \$100,000 by the Maine Board of Pharmacy.

The fines related to 15 incidents where the corporation's stores either failed to have a pharmacist in charge on duty, or reducing stores' opening hours without notifying the Board.

The fines ranged from \$730 to \$26,000, with the the company's pharmacy in Auburn landing the largest fine, after it reportedly failed to meet the State's requirement for pharmacies to open for 40 hours a week for 18 weeks between Oct 2021 and Apr 2022.

The store was found to have opened for just 16 hours during one week in mid-Dec 2021.

Walgreens reported that workforce shortages were the primary factor behind the issues, noting that its efforts to move pharmacists between stores were insufficient.

CVS was also fined \$19,800 by the Board for four similar breaches.

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