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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus a full page from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

APP's 'must attend' sessions

SEVEN weeks out from the start of the 2022 Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP), former Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Kos Sclavos has revealed his list of "must attend" sessions.

With a Federal Election looming, Sclavos has touted Minister for Health, Greg Hunt's opening address as his top pick, followed closely by Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler's speech, both of which are slated for the first day of the event.

The launch of the Indigenous Wellness Program, which aims to give pharmacists the skills to embed cultural safety into their practice is ranked third on the list.

See **page three** for more information.

Pharmacy hits 5 million COVAX mark

COMMUNITY pharmacies across Australia have delivered more than one million doses of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) in the last two-and-a-half weeks to reach the five million dose milestone, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia reports.

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, noted that there has been a sharp acceleration in the pace of the COVAX rollout through pharmacies in recent weeks, with the sector hitting the three million dose mark on Christmas Eve, followed by the four millionth shot administered on 18 Jan.

"This is an extraordinary achievement, over a relatively short period of time," he said.

"The many thousands of pharmacies delivering these vaccinations are to be congratulated on their contribution to the fight against COVID.

"Today, as we see many aspects of our life resuming closer to normal, we have our pharmacists and pharmacy assistants to thank.

"They have worked tirelessly including through the Christmas-New Year period to deliver vaccinations, over and above their other daily responsibilities.



"Our trusted, highly professional community pharmacies are leading in our national effort to get back to normal – or at least to a 'new normal'."

Meanwhile, the number of people eligible to receive booster shots is set to increase over the coming days, following new recommendations from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) that individuals aged 16 and 17 years can receive an additional shot three months after their second dose.

ATAGI has recommended a booster vaccination with 30

micrograms of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for anyone aged 16 and 17 years - including those who were 15-years-old when they received their primary doses.

In a statement released this morning ATAGI estimated that as of 01 Feb approximately 65% of 16 and 17-year-olds would be eligible for the booster.

ATAGI has also recommended that severely immunocompromised patients in the 16 to 17 years cohort who have already received a third dose of the vaccine should be given a booster three months after their last shot.

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Guild mourns Michael Beahan

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is mourning the death of the organisation's first Western Australian Branch Director, Michael Beahan AM.

Beahan, who passed away on 30 Jan aged 85 years, joined the Guild in 1997, having held a Senate seat for nine years, including two years as President from 1994 to 1996.

After four years as Director of the WA Branch, Beahan moved into the role of National Director of Government Relations in 2001, a position he held until 2006, after which he continued to work with the Guild as a government consultant for another decade.

Beahan's contribution to the Guild was acknowledged in 2005, being presented with the organisation's Distinguished Service Award Medallion.

In a statement released this morning, a spokesperson for the Guild's WA Branch said, "always gracious, Michael is fondly remembered by all those members of the Guild family that had the pleasure to work and learn from one of the Guild's finest servants".

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, noted that Beahan had been a key architect in the development of the Community Pharmacy Agreements (CPAs), bringing his political and negotiating skills to the organisation.

"He saw that providing more services through pharmacies was a win-win situation and he advocated strongly for these services to be included in CPAs," he said.

Beware of fentanyl Rx's

PHARMACISTS are being warned that "all private prescriptions presented for potent opioids should be treated with high suspicion", by indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL).

In a Practice Alert issued yesterday, PDL urged pharmacists to be on the lookout for red flags such as patients being unwilling to provide Medicare details or identification, providing elaborate backstories, or scripts for quantities greater than standard Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) amounts.

"Prescriptions for high-dose fentanyl patches and oxycodone tablets make up more than 50% of forgeries reported," PDL said.

"Despite ongoing warnings from the regulators and PDL, reports of pharmacists dispensing multiple supplies for these medicines continue to be received, which is of great concern.

"A 2019 Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission report emphasised the high street value of fentanyl which supports the

high incidence of fraudulent prescriptions for this drug.

"On receipt of the script, PDL recommends firstly ascertaining that the script is legitimate."

The alert was issued after the Civil and Administrative Tribunal of NSW cancelled the professional registrations of David Wilson Day Night Chemist Kirrawee, co-owners, Dillan Lal and Priya Patel, who were found to have dispensed Schedule 8 and S4D medicines including oxycodone, fentanyl and benzodiazepines in quantities that did not accord with the recognised therapeutic standard of what was appropriate in the circumstances, to a number of patients over a 20-month period to 15 Mar 2018, with a non-renewal period of three years.

The husband and wife business partners were also found to have failed to exercise appropriate oversight over the pharmacy, with employee pharmacist, Peter Foster, having his registration suspended for six months for his dispensing practices at the Kirrawee pharmacy (PD 31 Jan).



Dispensary Corner

SEEING a long-time rival succeed can drive change, and Rafael Nadal's triumph at the Australian Open appears to have been the push that was needed to convince Novak Djokovic to get immunised against COVID-19.

The Serbian superstar had been a hot favourite to claim a 21st Grand Slam title at Melbourne Park, when he announced he had received an exemption to travel to Australia in Jan.

However, it was Nadal who secured the title, nudging one Grand Slam win ahead of Djokovic, with the unvaccinated Serb being forced to leave the country before a ball was served in anger.

With the French Government announcing it will follow Australia's lead in banning unvaccinated players ahead of the French Open, Djokovic is reportedly ready to get vaccinated, his biographer, Daniel Muksch, claims.

Welcoming Djokovic's reported change of heart, on breakfast TV this morning, Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, said the move may spur others on to get their shots, saying "that would be the real win out of all of this".

"I'm happy for anybody anywhere to be vaccinated, and if in some small way as a country we have encouraged Novak or any other individual to do that, then that's great," Hunt said.

"But you know what's much more important? I think that will encourage more people who have been hesitant to be vaccinated."

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Crampeze and Pharmacy Daily are this week giving away a \$50 Woolworths gift card each day.

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