

## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features two pages of news plus a full page from TerryWhite Chemmart.

## Embrace the future with TWC

**TERRYWHITE** Chemmart (TWC) is embracing innovation to help pharmacy owners to develop deeper relationships with their patients.

The group provides access to digital platforms to enable pharmacies to provide greater flexibility for patients.

See **page three** for more.

## Remdesivir gets COVID boost

**THERAPEUTIC** Goods Administration (TGA) has granted a second provisional determination for COVID-19 treatment, remdesivir, for the proposed use in children and adults who are at risk of progressing to severe COVID-19.

# RACGP pharmacy plan nonsensical

**PROPOSALS** made by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), promoting alternatives to the existing community pharmacy model for dispensing medicines, are “nonsensical” and “short-sighted”, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, believes.

Tassone told *Pharmacy Daily*, the RACGP’s call for a central supplier to take on the role of drug storage and supply, rather than pharmacies, made in its proposal to the Review of the National Medicines Policy (*PD 04 Feb*), was not in line with the views of GPs working in the community.

He noted that the community pharmacy network has (and continues to) play a key role in ensuring timely access to medicines throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It seems that the RACGP has very short memories from the COVID-19 pandemic where community pharmacies kept their doors open and were there for their patients ensuring continuity of care and access to essential medicines,” Tassone said.

“To suggest that there should



be a centralised dispensing and distribution of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines that bypasses or is at the expense of community pharmacies is hopelessly out of touch with the realities of what occurs on the ground in communities across Australia each and every day.

“The last two years has seen many general practices transitioning to telehealth for periods, while pharmacies were fronting up day-in day-out helping coordinate things like electronic and digital image prescriptions from doctors practising remotely.

“Pharmacies were overseeing making sure medicines got in the hands of patients and being there to assist in whatever way needed.

“The RACGP position on community pharmacy is not reflective of the strong relationships that pharmacists have with their local GP colleagues including those near my pharmacy.

“It is completely disconnected from the collaboration that occurs to help deliver patient care and access to medicines.

“I would be utterly embarrassed if this was my representative body espousing the supposed views of my profession.”

## Symbion, ProPharma sign PharmX deal

**PHARMACY** software provider, Corum Group, has announced that wholesalers, Symbion and ProPharma, have signed a long-term deal to continue to use the PharmX platform across their Australian and New Zealand-based businesses.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange, the company said the initial agreement was for a three-year

term with a rolling term for a further two years.

Corum Executive Chair, Nick England, said the agreement was an important development for the companies.

“We view this as an endorsement of the recent investments we have made in PharmX and our development plans going forward,” England said.



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### Dispensary Corner

**GETTING** out into nature can be a great way to destress and get some exercise, but it's not without its costs, with entry into National Parks often more expensive than a concessional Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) prescription.

However, a new program in Canada could help, by allowing doctors to prescribe a 12-month Parks Canada Discovery Pass - worth slightly less than \$80.

The program aims to strip away the cost barriers around getting out in nature and giving people access to the parks.

Vancouver-based GP, Dr Melissa Lem, who launched the program in British Columbia in 2020, said prescribers across the country will be able to prescribe the passes to patients by the end of the year.

She said the next step in boosting urban-based Canadians' access to nature was to organise free transport to and from the National Parks, to remove another barrier to accessing the parks.

## Record RAT results: RCPA

**AUSTRALIANS** should be required to report the results of all COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs) taken at home, the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) believes.

In a new position statement released this morning, the RCPA said that RATs have an important role in supporting PCR tests in surveillance monitoring for COVID-19, but stressed the home testing kits "have inherent performance limitations".

The College warned that the rate of false negatives associated with self-test RATs could be "as high as four-in-10 in COVID-19 positive RAT users in asymptomatic people", adding that it was important for all RAT results to be recorded through centralised system, not solely positive cases.

"One major risk of self-testing (home use) is the potential loss of epidemiological information about the number of COVID-19 tests performed and the results," the RCPA said.

"The College strongly supports the establishment of electronic online RAT notification systems (for both positive and negative results) to maintain this vital flow of accurate data."



The RCPA also recommended that Australian jurisdictions should require confirmatory PCR tests for any RAT-positive patient admitted to hospital, to confirm diagnosis, for critical care workers - to confirm the need for them to be furloughed and ensure appropriate future infection control measures.

The College added that PCR tests should be used to confirm the results of positive RATs for pregnant women, and patients who are eligible for monoclonal antibody or other antiviral therapies, to avoid unnecessary treatment and potential adverse reactions.


## Intern of the Year finalists named

**WITH** seven weeks to go before the 2021 MIMS/ Pharmacy Guild of Australia Intern of the Year winner is announced, the field of candidates for the title has been cut to four finalists.

The final four includes two Queensland-based interns, Brooke Bevis from Livelife Pharmacy Marcrossan Street, Port Douglas, and Firouzeh Farihi Zadeh who works at the Alive Pharmacy Warehouse Westcourt, Cairns, alongside Western Australian-based Antoni Ukalovic from Optimal Pharmacy Plus, Coolbellup in Perth, and Chemist King Colonel Light Gardens, Adelaide's Steven Krashos.

The winner will receive a \$4,500 prize to support their education, plus flights, accommodation and a full registration to attend this year's Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference on the Gold Coast.

Announcing the finalists, Guild Queensland Branch President, Chris Owen, praised their patient-centric focus.



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