

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

TWC in line for Retailer Award

TERRYWHITE Chemmart's (TWC's) Vaccination Excellence Campaign has earned the group a nomination in the 2022 Retailer Awards, Customer Experience of the Year title.

TWC Executive General Manager, Nick Munroe, said being shortlisted for the award was "testament to the incredible work" done by the group's pharmacists over the last year.

"These teams continue to operate under enormous pressure to ensure Australians are well protected, so it is pleasing to know their hard work is being recognised by the wider retail industry," he said.

Omicron heaps pressure on business

STATE and Territory Governments may need to revisit COVID-19 business support measures including rental relief programs, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Health Economics and Policy Committee Chair, Anthony Tassone, believes.

With relief provided under the NSW Government's *Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Regulation 2021* set today, Tassone told **Pharmacy Daily** that throughout the pandemic "the Guild has had concerns about the ability of some pharmacies... to maintain their rental payments".

Tassone warned that without necessary rental support for pharmacies in areas that have been most severely impacted by the latest wave of the pandemic from authorities and landlords, patients' access to medicines could be impacted.

"Community pharmacies are not only an important tenant for any shopping centre, but more

importantly they are a critical part of our primary healthcare system – and if a pharmacy is forced to vacate their premises due to lease and rental pressures, it's ultimately patients that lose out," he said.

"What the current events of the Omicron variant spreading rapidly across the country are showing is that this pandemic is far from over, and businesses across multiple industries continue to face many challenges particularly with workforce to keep their doors open and for ongoing service delivery.

"We hope that landlords take a long-term view with regards to their pharmacy tenants.

"Community pharmacies are a resilient and stable business, but like any other business cannot afford to pay above-the odds rent.

"During the pandemic, there have been occasions where State governments have provided business support to business owners who have been impacted



by COVID-19 restrictions, including pharmacies, which have been of great benefit to meet immediate financial obligations.

"Revisiting these business support programs can't be ruled out should the need arise.

"The Guild provides a range of resources for members including the annual *Guild Rental* report to help support members in their negotiations and discussions with landlords."

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Victoria expands COVAX workforce

CONCERNS over the threat posed by the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has prompted the Victorian Department of Health to issue a Public Health Emergency Order authorising a new class of immunisers.

Under the new Limited Scope COVID-19 Vaccinator class health services will be given the flexibility "to select from a broader range of suitable candidates, whether they be existing health services personnel or newly engaged additional workers, to support Victoria's COVID-19 vaccination efforts".

The new measures will allow authorised people to undertake COVID-19 vaccination activities - once they have completed mandatory training - for a period of six months, unless the order is revoked earlier.

Immunisers engaged under this order will be restricted to vaccinating patients aged 18 years and older.

RAT list expands

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has updated its list of COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) self-test kits approved for use in Australia.

The updated list includes 21 tests provided by 22 sponsors, with three products given the regulator's greenlight since the start of Jan.

Of the 21 separate tests, nine have been classified as "very high sensitivity".

All the approved tests had a sensitivity rating over 80%.

Qld UTI trial extended

QUEENSLAND Health's decision to extend the Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot - Queensland (UTIPP-Q) is being hailed as a "definitive commitment to the advancement of women's healthcare in the State".

The continuation of the program will allow women aged 18 to 65 years to access immediate treatment for UTIs through community pharmacies until 30 Jun.

Welcoming the decision to extend the trial, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch President, Chris Owen, said it reflected the State Government's recognition of the sector's role in delivering primary healthcare services.

"One in every two Australian women experiences a UTI in their lifetime," he said.

"The extension of the Pilot gives women affected by an uncomplicated UTI access to early, convenient and effective treatment from their participating local community pharmacy.

"Access to timely and appropriate medical treatment can be difficult for many Queensland women.

"The quicker a UTI can be diagnosed and treated, or referred to another healthcare provider

if necessary, the less likely the patient is to experience further complications that may result in hospitalisation.

"Participating community pharmacies are pleased to continue supporting patients and advancing women's healthcare."

As of 02 Dec 2021, 819 pharmacies in the State had registered to participate in the program, with the service accessed by more than 6,300 patients.

Pilot Lead and Queensland University of Technology School of Clinical Sciences Head, Professor Lisa Nissen, said she was pleased with the uptake of the service.

"These figures demonstrate a clear demand for the service in Queensland communities and a willingness from community pharmacy to meet that demand," she said.

"The Pilot's success has illustrated the key role community pharmacy can play in reducing pressure on public health assets whilst still providing world-class primary healthcare services - not just in metropolitan areas - but in the regional, rural and remote communities that Queensland women call home."



Dispensary Corner

DRAMATIC changes in older men's lifestyles have often been jokingly put down to "menopause", but researchers from the University of Alberta have confirmed that male menopause is a real and treatable condition.

While historically rash purchases of sporty cars, yachts or motorbikes have been associated with men of a certain age compensating for a loss of libido, weight gain and fatigue.

However, the researchers from the University's Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences reported that such acquisitions do not measure up to effective treatment.

Thankfully, they reported that pharmacists were well placed to help gentlemen get through this life-changing experience.

Co-author of the study, published in the *Canadian Pharmacists Journal*, Assistant Clinical Professor, Nathan Beahm, said the profession had a role to play in helping patients understand that their symptoms are not just a normal part of the aging process.

"Pharmacists may see patients more often than physicians and interact with them more," Beahm said.

"Pharmacists can engage in screening and ask some initial questions to identify patients who might benefit from treatment and might otherwise slip through the cracks of the system."

Dispensary Corner's author has now decided to cancel his order for a new Harley Davidson.

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