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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Antiviral rollout 'disappointing'

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is calling for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) eligibility criteria for COVID-19 antivirals to be expanded, to combat surging case numbers.

SHPA CEO, Kristen Michaels, said the current PBS eligibility model was delaying treatment, with just 50,000 doses being dispensed to date.

"Hospital pharmacists understand oral COVID-19 antivirals intimately – being the first to supply these medicines at the start of 2022 before they were subsidised by the PBS," she said.

UTI trial becomes permanent service

PHARMACISTS in Queensland join their peers in the UK, New Zealand and parts of Canada, in being authorised to prescribe treatments for urinary tract infections (UTI).

The State Government gave the green light for pharmacies to transition the UTI Pharmacy Pilot - Queensland to a permanent service yesterday (PD breaking news).

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch President, Chris Owen, welcomed the decision, commending the Palaszczuk Government "for putting Queensland women's health needs first".

"The nearly 9,000 women that have accessed the UTI service since its inception are evidence that this service is in demand and provides positive health outcomes," he said.

"We know from experience, the quicker a case of UTI is diagnosed and treated, the less likely the patient is to experience further complications that may result in

hospitalisation."

MEANWHILE, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Fei Sim, has hit out at criticism of the program, accusing medical groups of fuelling a turf war rather than focusing on patient outcomes.

"This pilot allowed thousands of Queensland women to get timely access to treatments for uncomplicated UTIs from their local pharmacist," she said.

Sim rejected the RACGP's suggestions that community pharmacy are "unsupervised retail settings" (PD 05 Jul).

"Pharmacists are registered health professionals with the same ethical and moral obligations as doctors," she said.

"Measures like pharmacist vaccination and the UTI pilot help free up doctors' precious time for complex chronic disease management and more complex presentations.

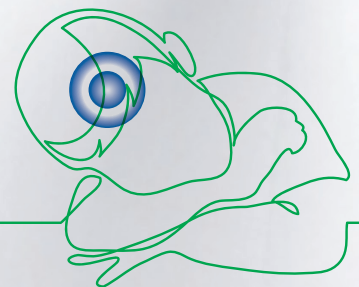
"We have a health system that is



approaching breaking point. The health profession needs to work together to support patients as their health needs become more complex. This includes reducing duplication and empowering patients with self-care.

"Working together means putting aside turf wars and finding better ways to support patients. PSA will not apologise for our commitment to timely access to care. We remain committed to working collaboratively with the entire health sector to deliver the best outcomes for patients."

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Dispensary Corner

SOMETIMES you don't know what you've got until it's gone. It appears a pair of thieves who robbed an Irish pharmacy in 2009 failed to realise they had nicked a priceless artifact when they dumped a safe and its seemingly worthless contents into a skip in Dublin. What they didn't realise was inside the safe was a priceless 5,000-year-old gold necklace. "Those thieves missed out big time when they unknowingly threw this treasure away," a spokesperson for the National Museum of Ireland said. The 78g jewel is believed to have belonged to an early king of Ireland, the *Irish Examiner* reported. The necklace had found its way to the Strokestown Pharmacy in Roscommon, after a local man discovered it while cutting turf in the nearby Coggalbeg bog in 1945. The pharmacy's owner had treated the golden piece as a family heirloom since.

Booster decision backed

THE Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's (ATAGI's) decision to lift the eligibility for second COVID-19 booster vaccines is being welcomed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PD 07 Jul). Acting Guild National President, Nick Panayiaris, said allowing people aged 30 years and older to have a fourth dose of a COVID-19 vaccine would help manage the latest wave of infections. "This is a pragmatic decision and one which the community pharmacy sector stands ready to help eligible patients take advantage of," he said. "Community pharmacies already have administered more than 7.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines and this is a reflection of the trust communities across Australia have in their local pharmacy. "Most pharmacies also are open longer hours and at weekends so patients can easily access the vaccine." A spokesperson for the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) also welcomed the ATAGI decision. However, they reiterated calls for equitable remuneration for pharmacist immunisers. "When it comes to vaccinations,



you are receiving exactly the same service irrespective of location. "However, huge discrepancies still remain between pharmacist remuneration and that of other health providers," they said. Under the new advice, ATAGI has recommended that adults aged 50 to 64 should receive a "winter dose", in addition to those over 65, residential aged or disability care facilities, Indigenous Australians over 50 years of age, and severely immunocompromised patients. The new arrangement also allows for people aged 30 to 49 year who were previously not eligible to receive a second booster shot, to have one - although ATAGI noted "the benefit for people in this age group is less certain".

Health Minister to address PSA22

FEDERAL Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler, is set to outline the Albanese Government's health priorities at the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's annual conference (PSA22) later this month. PSA National President, Dr Fei Sim, confirmed that Butler will officially open PSA22 at the Hyatt Regency in Sydney on 29 Jul. "This will be a great opportunity to hear directly from the Minister about the incoming Government's agenda, and how we can continue to support the health and well-being of Australians," she said. "We are very excited to have the Minister joining us at PSA22, where hundreds of pharmacists from different backgrounds and clinical settings will come together to discuss the latest in pharmacy." Former Olympian-turned-doctor, Dr Jana Pittman, and pharmacist-turned-MasterChef star, Depinder Chhibber, will also address PSA22.

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