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Today's issue of PD

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

Deadline looms for earlybird rego

DELEGATES planning to attend the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Pharmacy Connect conference in Sydney this Sep have until Thu to secure earlybird registration rates. The event will be held at the Hilton in Sydney's CBD from 01 to 03 Sep, with pharmacist-turned-Federal Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Rural and Regional Health, Emma McBride, joining the speaker line-up. Organisers are offering a COVID-19 refund guarantee to delegates who are unable to attend due to restrictions. **CLICK HERE** to register.

Guild rejects RACGP's UTIPP-Q claims

CONCERNS about pharmacists prescribing during the Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot - Queensland (UTIPP-Q) raised by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) are unfounded, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch believes. Responding to claims made by the RACGP in its submission on the proposed amendments to part two of the *UTIPP-Q circumstances and conditions of the extended practice authority (EPA) - Pharmacists*, consultation paper, Guild Queensland Branch President, Chris Owen, said the trial's outcome report backed the safety and efficacy of pharmacists' prescribing. "The outcomes report of the UTIPP-Q, independently produced by the Queensland University of Technology, clearly shows that the UTI service provided safe, effective and convenient care to women experiencing uncomplicated UTIs," he said.

"The UTI service provided significant value and benefit to female patients. "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. "Women were appropriately referred due to age, gender, complicating conditions, symptoms other than UTI or when their symptoms didn't resolve so that they could still receive treatment. "Community pharmacists have followed the same protocols as general practitioners. "The outcomes report also demonstrated that 'pharmacists have delivered safe and appropriate care that align to clinical protocols within the Australian Therapeutic Guidelines', and that 'pharmacists have the appropriate skills, competencies and training to manage the empiric treatment of uncomplicated UTIs in the community pharmacy'.



"The incredible strain on our peers within general practices and emergency departments has and continues to be widely reported on. "Community pharmacists working to their full scope can assist in reducing the burden on general practice and emergency departments and help improve timely access to primary healthcare services for Queenslanders. "Queensland community pharmacists providing the UTI service is progress towards the success seen in similar countries, where pharmacists have contributed safely and positively to healthcare services for many years through expansion of their scope of practice."

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Increased vax remuneration needed

COMMUNITY pharmacies' capacity to support the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign is being limited by the current remuneration being offered for administering jabs, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Northern Territory Branch President, Peter Hatswell, believes.

In an interview with the *ABC Alice Springs* this morning, Hatswell noted that the closure of Territory Government funded vaccination hubs had limited the rollout of primary and booster shots.

"That took away the bulk of the vaccinations that were happening, so a lot of that capacity has been pushed onto pharmacy and obviously GPs as well," he said.

"So it's made it harder to get in and get that vaccine in a timely manner".

However, he said increased remuneration funded by either the Federal or Territory Government



would enable pharmacies to bolster their resources to provide more vaccination appointments.

"For the COVID vaccines we are getting remunerated for our time, but at a pretty low level," he said.

"It's not commensurate with the time it takes to do it.

"If there was more remuneration possible, even if it's through the Territory Government, because if they've closed their hubs perhaps with the money they're saving on that they could redirect it towards pharmacy and

then we could possibly employ somebody specifically to deal with vaccination and that would increase our capacity."

Meanwhile, Hatswell told the *ABC* that Alice Springs Pharmacy was reporting that it was "pretty much booked out for Moderna through to Sep", with the vaccine proving popular with patients seeking a second booster shot.

However, he said that there were limited appointments available for people who were wanted to get the Pfizer jab.

Revitalife refunds

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has accepted a court-enforceable undertaking from therapeutic adjustable bed and recliner lift chair supplier Revitalife, over its sales practices between Jul 2019 and Jan 2022.

The company allegedly made unsolicited calls to consumers offering to conduct a 'Sleep Assessment' survey and arrange a home visit.

Revitalife admitted it likely breached the Australian Consumer Law when it failed to clearly disclose that the purpose of the unsolicited visit was to sell its products to customers who were predominantly older people.

The company has ceased conducting in-home sales, and undertaken to update its complaints handling system and to establish a consumer law compliance scheme.

TGA approve Novavax for adolescents

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has granted provisional approval for Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine (Nuvaxovid) to be administered to individuals aged 12 to 17 years.

The decision follows previous approvals for the use of the vaccine in adults (*PD* 20 Jan) and as a booster for adults (*PD* 10 Jun).

"As with adults, the vaccine should be administered in adolescents intramuscularly as

a course of two doses 21 days apart," the TGA said.

"The vaccine contains the same ingredients as those used in older age groups."

The potential use of the vaccine in the adolescent cohort as part of the national COVID-19 vaccination program will now be considered by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), which will provide advice to the Federal Government in the coming weeks.

Brits get green light to donate blood

PEOPLE who spent more than six months living in the UK between 1980 and 1996, during the 'mad cow disease' crisis, can now give blood in Australia.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved an application from the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood to remove the restriction, paving the way for 18,000 new donors to give blood and plasma.

The decision to dump the rule, which came into effect in

Dec 2000, was made after an in-depth risk assessment and modelling by the University of NSW's Kirby Institute, found it was no longer needed.

"This excellent outcome demonstrates the value of careful risk analyses, to ensure that restrictions on blood donor eligibility achieve the right balance between safety and sufficiency in the blood supply," the Kirby Institute's Scientia Professor, John Kaldor, said.

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Dispensary Corner

TRADITIONAL wedding vows include the words "till death do us part", but usually that's the only reminder of mortality during these joyous occasions.

That wasn't the case for a couple in Singapore who last week tied the knot at one of the Lion City's "columbariums" - a facility used for the public storage of crematory urns.

The traditional ceremony took place at Nirvana Memorial Garden (pictured), with the unusual location chosen because it was where the pair first met.

"It's fate. We met here - she came to pay her respects while I was touring the area," the erstwhile groom told the local *Asia One* news website.

The couple had always hoped to take their wedding photos at the special place, while the new husband also said he saw it as a way of 'informing' his deceased relatives that he was getting married while at the same time paying his respects.

The report noted that the pair were clearly dead serious about the importance of matrimony.



Care to cough up fine

CARE Pharmaceuticals is being ordered to cease distribution of its Little Coughs Ivy Leaf (*Hedera helix*) products bearing labels representing that they can be given to children aged six months to two years, over a "severe breach" of Consumer Healthcare Product Australia (CHPA) Code of Practice.

The CHPA Complaints Panel found that Care failed to comply with a iNova Pharmaceutical's request to provide it with evidence to substantiate the use of *Hedera helix* in the quantities and extract ratios used in the Little Coughs formulations for dosing in the six months to two years range.

The panel noted that the front labels on the products included statements that they were suitable for infants aged six months and older, "for the soothing relief of coughs and chesty congestion", while warnings on the rear were in fine print advising users to "consult your healthcare professional: before using in children under two years of age".



Care submitted a list of 47 references to support its safety claims, however, the panel found four articles did not support the use of *Hedera helix* for infants.

"The panel then went on to conclude that in promoting the products for use in children in that age group, Care had engaged in unconscionable commercial practice in breach of section 4.1 of the Code," the CHPA said.

Care has been ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine to CHPA, to "immediately discontinue making the claims" about the products' safety for infants, and to stop distributing products bearing labels making the safety claims.

TGA reviewing COVID RAT performance

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is conducting a post-market review of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs), to assess their ability to detect emerging variants.

The TGA noted that as each variant of concern emerges, the manufacturers of RATs are expected to undertake an analysis of their products, to verify that they continue to perform as intended.

"As an additional measure, the TGA has commissioned the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, in collaboration

with the National (Serology) Reference Laboratory, an operating division of St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research, to undertake laboratory testing," the TGA said.

"This is to verify the manufacturer's claims regarding the analytical sensitivity (Limit of Detection - the lowest concentration at which an analyte can be detected (LoD)) for SARS-CoV-2 (wild-type - original SARS-CoV-2 strain) and the Delta and Omicron variants, with scope to expand testing for additional VoCs as they arise."

Guild Update

McBride at Pharmacy Connect

EMMA McBride, the only pharmacist currently a member of Federal parliament, will speak at Pharmacy Connect.

As the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Ms McBride has significant responsibilities in the Albanese government, where she advocates for better health services for all Australians.

Passionate about quality healthcare, she understands the unique challenges facing rural and regional communities when it comes to accessing healthcare, and hopes to play a role in shaping public policy that promotes the health and wellbeing of every Australian, regardless of where they live.

Pharmacy Connect is being held 01-03 September at the Hilton Sydney and is open to all levels of pharmacy, from pharmacists, pharmacy managers, pharmacy staff and group executives, to interns and students.

The conference features pre-conference workshops, a two-day education program, a 50-stand trade exhibition plus social networking opportunities.

Earlybird rates end this Thu, 28 Jul, and can be booked **HERE**.



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