

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news plus a full page from Wizard Pharmacy Services.

PA2022 program

DELEGATES attending the first Pharmacy Assistant National Conference in three years, in Brisbane this Oct, will hear from experts in a range of fields, including men's health, pain management and stress management.

The program for Pharmacy Assistant National Conference 2022 (PA2022) also includes an inspiring session with Winter Olympic speed skating gold medalist, Steven Bradbury, who will discuss his unlikely triumph in 2002.

The event will also include the announcement of the 2022 Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year.

Early bird registration is now open, offering delegates who want to attend PA2022 a \$65 discount.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the program.

PSA calls on Butler to back pharmacy

NEWLY appointed Federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, is being urged to invest in the pharmacy sector to address workforce retention challenges.

Welcoming confirmation of Butler as Health Minister, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, called on the Government to support the profession.

"There are consistent challenges in recruiting and retaining pharmacists across all sectors, with many choosing to leave pharmacy because of low base rates of pay," he said.

"We need investment in a whole of profession workforce strategy so that we can sustainably meet all the exciting opportunities in front of the profession, while providing rewarding careers, both professionally and financially."

Freeman also called on the Minister to ensure "all Australians have access to fully-funded National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccine, including influenza vaccinations", across pharmacy and general practice settings.

"Patients still face out-of-pocket costs to receive an influenza vaccination under the NIP if

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delivered by a pharmacist, whilst this same service is subsidised if done at a general practice," he said.

"It must also be a priority for the incoming Minister for Health and Aged Care to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the NIP vaccines and that all Australians can access fully funded vaccinations from their local pharmacist."

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, also welcomed the appoints of Butler, Assistant Minister for Mental Health, pharmacist, Emma McBride, and Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney.

"The appointments of Mark Butler and Emma McBride underscore the commitment by the new Albanese Government to continuing to ensure the profession grows and is able to continue meeting the needs of the communities it serves," Twomey said.

"Both come to their positions with strong experience in the health sector – Mark Butler as a former Minister for Health and more recently as Opposition Spokesperson on Health, and Emma McBride with the frontline experience of being a pharmacist. Ged Kearney also brings her



experience as Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing."

"Their experience will help to further develop the already good working ties the Guild and the Labor Party have developed over many years, and we look forward to working closely with them."

Twomey added that Labor's pre-election commitment to cut the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) general co-payment from \$42.50 to \$30 from 01 Jan 2023, would "help build confidence that community pharmacies can continue to grow and deliver a growing range of services to patients".



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National strategy needed to fight flu

STATE-BASED free influenza vaccination campaigns will be key to curbing infections, but the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes a “nationwide solution” is needed.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, said that while free primary care-based flu jab programs in Queensland, South Australia, NSW, Victoria and Western Australia, were a positive step, he said more needed to be done to protect Australians from the virus into the future.

“Public health teams are rightly alarmed by the surging influenza caseload across the nation.

Hospitalisations are already placing strain on stretched health resources.

We must act with urgency and work together to vaccinate as many people against influenza as soon as possible.

“I thank the South Australian, Western Australian, NSW and Victorian governments

for launching free flu vaccine programs following Queensland’s announcement last week.

“We urge Tasmania, the ACT, and the Northern Territory to immediately follow.

“These announcements demonstrate the crucial role that pharmacists continue to play in protecting the health of Australians.

“We appreciate that these governments are making a critical investment, by remunerating pharmacists for providing this service.

“However, these state-based time-limited programs are only a band-aid for the bigger problem of funding arrangements which have not kept pace with population health needs.

“We need to make it easier for all Australians to be protected against influenza every year, by removing cost barriers currently faced by many Australians.

“It is time for the Federal Government to extend the



Medicare Benefits Schedule to fund the costs to patients for administration of National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccinations by their pharmacist.

“PSA has been calling for this for some time.”

Meanwhile, Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, said that since the State launched its free flu jab campaign last week vaccination rates have “shot up by 14.7%”.

Sanofi, RUM deal

SANOFI Australia has entered a partnership with the Return Unwanted Medicines (RUM) Project to raise awareness about the environmental impact of incorrect disposal of unused and expired medicines.

Since the RUM Project was launched in 2001, more than 11.5 million kilograms of unwanted medications have been collected through community pharmacies.

Sanofi Australia and New Zealand Country Head, Karen Hood, said the company wanted to boost the general public’s awareness of the importance of disposing of medicines appropriately.

“That’s why we’re proud to partner with The RUM Project,” she said.

“Together, our pursuit is to encourage all Australians to dispose of unwanted medicines responsibly via their local pharmacy.”

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References: 1. Moderna Data on File. 2. Spikevax Product Information, 18 February 2022.

3. <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/getting-your-vaccination/booster-doses#winter-dose>. Accessed 25 March 2022.

Moderna Australia Pty Ltd. Level 6, 60 Martin Place, Sydney, NSW 2000.

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Dispensary Corner

PROLIFIC British sperm donor, James MacDougall, is being dragged before the courts for failing to reveal that he has a genetic condition which causes learning difficulties.

MacDougall, who initially acted as a donor through a private arrangement to help a friend, concealed that he suffers from Fragile X syndrome, which would have prevented him from sharing his sperm through a clinic.

High Court Judge, Justice Nathalie Lieven, described the 37-year-old, whose donations have produced 15 children, as irresponsible, for not informing his clients of his condition.

Lieven said the Court would normally “anonymise” parents’ names to protect the identity of children in such matters, however, she ruled that there were strong grounds for naming MacDougall.

“I take into account the fundamental irresponsibility of James MacDougall acting as a sperm donor whilst knowing that he had Fragile X Syndrome, an inheritable condition, without at the very least making it entirely clear to the mothers concerned the implications of Fragile X,” she said.

“James MacDougall knew that he could not be a sperm donor through a clinic because of his condition.

“There is therefore a very specific benefit in him being named in the hope that women will look him up on the internet and see this judgment.”

DDS celebrates 2022 PotY in person

DISCOUNT Drug Stores (DDS) pharmacy owners and staff met for the group’s first in-person event in three years on the Gold Coast this week.

The three-day conference saw the acknowledgement of the efforts made by pharmacy teams and individuals to support their communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Western Australia-based Mandurah DDS pharmacist, Charity Nyakubaya, was named as the group’s National Pharmacist of the Year (PotY) Award winner, with judges lauding her commitment to providing positive health outcomes to patients and inspiring members of the team to strive for improved customer experiences.

Queensland’s April Mills from Thornton DDS, was presented with the National Retail Manager of the Year title for her exemplary customer experience, which has

helped secure long-term customer traffic growth.

The DDS National Pharmacy Assistant of the Year crown went to Amanda Young from Scenic Rim DDS in Queensland, who was recognised for her dedication to delivering exceptional customer service and exceeding expectations by taking initiative and stepping up to challenges.

DDS Head, Patrick Stoll (pictured), noted that the event provided a welcome opportunity for the group’s national team to get together and discuss professional and business development.

“Most importantly, the event provided an opportunity for us to formally acknowledge and celebrate the hard work of our pharmacy and retail teams over the past year and beyond,” he said.

“Throughout the COVID crisis, the critical role of pharmacists



in delivering health care services and assistance to our community has never been more important – it was a period where our discount pharmacies continued to provide convenient and valuable healthcare services to their customers and the community.

“We are proud to recognise and honour the award winners at this year’s conference, thanking each of our pharmacy and retail employees across Discount Drug Stores who continue to create a strong network.”

Biosimilar initiative aims to boost use

GENERIC and biosimilar medicines brand, Sandoz, is aiming to boost patient access and adoption by at least 30% in more than 30 countries by 2030, through the Act4Biosimilars campaign.

The initiative aims to address misinformation about the safety, efficacy and science of biosimilars, to increase acceptance and use of the medicines, to improve the sustainability of health systems, Sandoz CEO, Richard Saynor, said.

“Healthcare systems are facing more pressure than ever before, which can be attributed to the costs associated with a growing, ageing population, more people



being diagnosed with chronic diseases and, most recently, the pandemic,” he said.

“Biosimilars are part of the solution to support a more sustainable healthcare system for all and we are proud to be the founding sponsor of Act4Biosimilars, which will drive action to bring these more affordable treatment options to patients who need them.”

GSK vax deal

GLAXOSMITHKLINE (GSK) has announced a deal to acquire US biopharmaceutical company, Affinivax, for US\$3.3 billion.

The Massachusetts-based firm is “pioneering the development of a novel class of vaccines”, including next-generation pneumococcal vaccines, *BioPharma Reporter*, reported.



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