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Today's issue of PD

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

Flu cases soar

LABORATORY-CONFIRMED cases of influenza are continuing to rise rapidly, with the latest *With Vaccines Influenza Report Card* reporting 38,743 infections to 22 May.

Case numbers which have resulted in 368 hospitalisations to date, are higher than they were at the same point in recent "horror flu seasons" in 2017 and 2019.

The report card noted that as of 30 May 7.1 million doses of flu vaccines had been administered, with the ACT and Tasmania having the highest rate of uptake (35%), while fewer than one-in-five people in the NT had received a flu shot at that stage.

Tasmania to join free flu jab push

PHARMACIST immunisers in Tasmania will join the state's free influenza vaccination campaign from Mon 06 Jun.

The month-long vaccination blitz announced by Tasmanian Premier and Health Minister, Jeremy Rockliff, will enable pharmacists in the state to administer free shots to residents aged 10 years and older, in contrast to similar schemes in other jurisdictions where children aged five years and older can receive the vaccine in community pharmacies.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Tasmanian Branch President, Helen O'Byrne welcomed the decision to harness "the vaccinating capacity of community pharmacists" to combat rising flu case numbers.

"This is an important community health outcome for the people of Tasmania and will help keep them safe from severe illness," she said.

"While providers have already administered over 200,000 flu vaccinations to Tasmanians, the combination of COVID-19 and the

flu makes it all the more important for everyone to be vaccinated against the flu this season.

"This decision to make the flu vaccination available free of charge through community pharmacies is a very pragmatic move in helping ensure there is maximum uptake of flu vaccinations."

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, O'Byrne said the Guild was continuing to push for Tasmanian pharmacists to be given the green light to administer flu vaccinations to children aged five years and older, in line with COVID-19 vaccines.

She added that pharmacies participating in the program will be able to use their existing vaccine appointment booking and recording platforms, and will be required to bill the Department of Health every fortnight.

"We understand that remuneration will not be the lowest [rate being offered across jurisdictions offering free flu shots] or the highest," she said.



"We will be remunerated at the same rate for National Immunisation Program vaccines and for private vaccinations."

The decision to roll out the free flu shot campaign leaves the ACT and the Northern Territory as the only jurisdictions in the country not to implement a program to boost uptake of the vaccine.

MEANWHILE, the Tasmanian Government has also announced that from Sat, free flu vaccines will be available for infants aged six months and older through state-run childhood community vaccination clinics or GP surgeries.

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Collaboration impacts readmissions

PHARMACIST-LED interventions conducted in collaboration with GPs during transitions from hospital to community care can reduce readmissions, research reveals.

A meta-analysis of 37 articles involving pharmacists interacting with primary care doctors around medication management of patients who had recently been discharged from hospital, found interventions were associated with a statistically significant reduction in the proportion of patients readmitted.

The researchers from the University of Queensland, Princess Alexandra Hospital, the University of East Anglia and the University of Bologna, reported that “compared to control patients, the proportion of intervention patients readmitted at least once was significantly reduced by 13%, over follow-up periods in all studies combined, and by 22% at 30 day follow-up across studies reporting

this time point”.

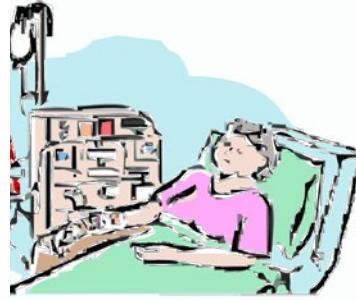
“Most of the interventions in this review involved a pharmacist undertaking a medication review to reconcile any differences between the discharge medication lists and current medication use, identifying and rectifying any medication-related problems, and addressing patient concerns,” the authors said.

“This usually occurred within 14 days of discharge.

“Subgroup analysis suggested no significant difference in readmissions in response to more than one interaction (i.e. follow-up phone call) compared with a single interaction only.

“This review suggests that pharmacist-led interventions which include direct pharmacist-PCP communication at transition of care, may be effective in reducing readmissions to hospital at 30 days.

“However, the absence of a



significant effect in randomised studies limits the level of certainty of these results.

“Future studies need to adopt more rigorous study designs, apply well defined patient eligibility criteria, adequately describe the actual care provided to both intervention and control groups, and include longer follow-up periods.”

The paper was published in *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*.



Dispensary Corner

REALITY TV shows seem to need at least one contestant with a link to the pharmacy sector, and the 2022 edition of the UK's *Love Island* series will be no exception.

Nottingham-based pharmaceutical sales rep, Ikenna Ekwonna (pictured), will be filling the shoes of British pharmacist, Anna Vakili, who starred in the show's 2019 series, without finding lasting love.

Ahead of Mon night's season opening episode, 23-year-old Ekwonna, said he believed his personality will live up life in the Spanish villa with “spontaneity and excitement”.

Explaining his decision to sign up to find romance on the small screen, the Nottingham native said, “I've only been in one past relationship, but now I think I'm at an age where I could find someone”.

Of course as countless series of multiple different reality TV match-making shows have demonstrated - if you're out to find that “special someone” do it with a TV crew following your every move.



FIP abstract deadline looms

PHARMACISTS have until 7.59am (AEST) on Mon 06 Jun, to submit abstracts to be presented at the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) World Congress in Seville, Spain, in Sep.

FIP will accept up to three abstracts per applicant, with the organisation to provide confirmation as to whether or not they have been accepted by 01 Jul.

Accepted abstracts will be published in the *Pharmacy Education Journal*.

CLICK HERE to make a submission.

SHPA welcomes McBride's appointment

PHARMACIST-TURNED-FEDERAL MP, Emma McBride's appointment as an Assistant Minister in the Health portfolio is being welcomed by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

SHPA CEO, Kristen Michaels, said that the newly appointed Assistant Minister for Mental Health, and Rural and Regional Health, would bring real world insights to the roles.

“Hospital Pharmacists are extremely proud to see fellow SHPA member and former hospital pharmacist, Emma McBride, taking on the dual roles of Assistant Minister for

Mental Health and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health,” she said.

“As a former Chief Pharmacist at Wyong Hospital, Assistant Minister McBride will bring a wealth of experience at the coalface to the Health portfolio, particularly regarding rural and regional health where access to equitable healthcare services remains a major issue.”

Michaels also welcomed Health Minister, Mark Butler, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney, and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, to the health portfolio.

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