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Today's issue of PD

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

Contrast media shortage update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has authorised the supply of a number of overseas-registered iodinated contrast media diagnostic agents, to help reduce the impact of shortages.

In an update issued by the TGA yesterday, health professions seeking information about supply should contact Guerbet Australia Pty Ltd on 02 8075 3007, Bayer Australia Pty Ltd on 1800 008 757, or GE Healthcare Australia Pty Ltd on 1300 887 764.

GE Healthcare, the largest supplier of contrast media in Australia, has previously forecast that it expects to resume normal supply in mid-Jul, following unexpected COVID-19 lockdowns in China.

Fraudster pharmacist gets six years

A **DISGRACED** pharmacist is set to spend more than six years behind bars for his role in conspiring to defraud the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

The former pharmacist was sentenced to six years and four months imprisonment for his part in the \$19 million scam, last week, with a non-parole period of four years.

Last week's sentencing hearing before the Sydney Downing Centre District Court came more than a year after the man was convicted by a jury in Apr 2021.

In a statement welcoming the sentencing decision the Commonwealth Department of Health said it "shows the serious consequences of attempts by trusted health provider to defraud taxpayers".

"This is the culmination of the strong collaboration between the Department of Health, the Australian Federal Police and the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, using information received via the Department's tip-off hotline," a spokesperson said.

"The Department of Health takes allegations of fraud and non-compliance by health providers



very seriously.

"We recognise that the overwhelming majority of health providers are aware of and comply with their obligations to claim benefits honestly and correctly.

"The Department has a strong health provider compliance program that protects the integrity of Australia's health payments system through the prevention, identification and treatment of incorrect claiming and fraud."

The sentence contrasts with the 350 hours of community service sentence handed down to the

owner of a Sydney pharmacy who was convicted of making 524 fraudulent PBS claims (PD 15 Mar 2021).

The Department of Health has urged anyone with information about suspected non-compliance or fraud of Government health payments by health providers to make a tip off using its 'REPORTING FRAUD' page, or by calling the Provider Benefits Integrity Hotline on 1800 314 808.



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 **NPS MEDICINEWISE**

Arma patients

BIOCEUTICALS is encouraging pharmacies to "arma" their customers against cold and flu symptoms by using its ArmaForce range of practitioner only supplements.

The products are designed to support the immune system to help relieve the symptoms of colds and flus.

See **page five** for more information about the range.



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Saunders named consultant PotY

VICTORIA-BASED accredited pharmacist and geriatric therapeutics specialist, Robyn Saunders, has been awarded the 2022 Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacy (AAPC) MIMS Consultant Pharmacist of the Year (PotY) title.

MIMS CEO, Robert Best, and outgoing AAPC Board Chair and former Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, presented Saunders with the award at ConPharm on the Gold Coast over the weekend.

Saunders has been an accredited pharmacist for 25 years, with the AAPC noting that she "has provided a highly valuable and sustained contribution to consultant pharmacy, with a strong commitment to excellence in the practice of medication management reviews".

"Her early post-graduation years were spent establishing a clinical hospital pharmacy service at a large Melbourne University-associated



teaching hospital," the AAPC said.

"During this time, she gained essential experience in clinical decision making and followed this up with further study required to become accredited with the AAPC.

"Robyn was one of the first pharmacists to specialise in geriatric therapeutics and one of the early practitioners working in GP practice.

"She is known by hundreds of accredited pharmacists for her close

attention to detail and rigorous evidence-based approach to medication management.

"Her dedication and commitment to appropriate management of medicines in aged care led her to develop innovative tools to ensure QUM."

Pictured are, AAPC Board Chair, George Tambassis, with Robyn Saunders and MIMS CEO Robert Best.

TGA consultation

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is conducting a public consultation seeking feedback on whether certain international scientific guidelines should be adopted.

International scientific guidelines are not limited to prescription medicines, but may also apply to over-the-counter (OTC), complementary and some listed medicines.

While guidelines that are adopted in Australia are generally not mandated by legislation, they provide guidance to sponsors to assist them to meet the legislative requirements and any deviation from a guideline relevant to an application to register or vary the registration of a medicine must be justified.

CLICK HERE for more information about the guidelines.

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▼ This vaccine is provisionally approved and is subject to additional monitoring in Australia. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse events at www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems.

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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No prison for teen pharmacy burglar

QUEENSLAND teenager, Jordan Paul Turner, has been handed a six month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, after smashing his way into a Sunshine Coast pharmacy.

The 19-year-old broke through the glass door of the Yandina Pharmacy on 18 May, setting off the store's alarm, *The Courier Mail* reported.

Once inside the pharmacy, Turner made his way to the dispensary, where he grabbed large quantities of prescription medications.

Police prosecutor, Mick Ruddiman, told a Magistrates Court that droplets of Turner's blood and tools he had used to break into the pharmacy were found at the scene.

He added that police were able to identify Turner as the suspect using fingerprints found on a bottle he had discarded in the store.

Turner was subsequently arrested at a unit in Coolum Beach, where



police found the stolen medication.

Turner's lawyer told the court that his client's offending was due to his drug use, which had started when he was 14 years of age.

The court also heard that he broke into two cars, stealing various items including paperwork related to one of the vehicles, sunglasses

and a garage remote.

Magistrate, Matthew McLaughlin, noted that Turner was on probation at the time of the offences and had breached the order.

McLaughlin went on to describe Turner's behaviour as "extremely childish", "gobsmacking" and "out of control".

Guild advisor role

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is looking to recruit a Government Relations Senior Advisor.

The successful candidate will be responsible for implementing the Guild's federal political engagement strategy to ensure political and policy objectives are met.

The role is full-time and based at the Guild's National Secretariat in Canberra.

The closing date for applications is 01 Jul.

[CLICK HERE](#) to apply.

Elite athletes unlikely to use dark web

THE World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA's) Intelligence and Investigations (I&I) Department's report into the extent and nature of performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) on the dark web, has found it is unlikely to be a significant source of drugs for high-level athletes.

WADA I&I Director, Gunter Younger, said the study was "useful in understanding the dark web from the point of view of a possible marketplace for prohibited substances".

"While the dark web does offer anonymity, buying performance-enhancing drugs there is fraught with risk," he said.

"In a large majority of cases, what you think you have purchased is not what you receive.

"Sometimes you get less, sometimes more, sometimes it is not even the substance you ordered... and you will never know unless you test it yourself."

Younger added that the dark web also exposed athletes to fraud and unreliable services.

Guild Update

PATY nominations closing

NOMINATIONS for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year Award (PATY) close on 1 July.

Pharmacy assistants can self-nominate or be nominated by a third party, such as an employer, colleague or industry representative.

As the premier award for pharmacy assistants, PATY assesses nominees against the criteria of skills, knowledge, leadership and customer services.

The national winner will be announced at the Pharmacy Assistant National Conference 2022 on 29 October, an event that is sure to be keenly attended following postponements in 2020 and 2021 due to the on-going impact of COVID-19.

The national winner will receive a prize package that includes a custom glass trophy, \$5,000 cash, a training package provided by The Pharmacy Guild, return flights and accommodation to APP2023 and PA2023 conferences, and an invitation to participate as a judge in the 2023 PATY National Judging Workshop.


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Dispensary Corner

SOARING temperatures in the UK have pharmacists warning sun-worshipping Brits to keep hydrated as the mercury rises. With the island nation bracing for highs in excess of 30C as part of a "mini heatwave", Medicine Direct Superintendent Pharmacist, Hussain Abdeh, is warning sun bathers to do more than slip, slop, slap. Abdeh urged people to keep an eye out for symptoms of dehydration, such as extreme thirst, headaches and tiredness. "Your urine will be a dark-yellow colour and pungent, and you may even feel dizzy, in which case speak to a doctor or pharmacist, who can recommend rehydration sachets that replenish the electrolytes in your body," he said. "Keep a reusable water bottle with you at all times, so you can take regular sips, and break up alcoholic drinks with pints of water." He recommended people drink six to eight glasses of water a day to stay hydrated.

Blooms scoops award



BLOOMS The Chemist Coogee has claimed the Outstanding Pharmacy title in the 2022 Randwick City Business Excellence Awards. The store's owner, Rohit Uppal, said the team was honoured to be recognised for its 'people-first' approach to delivering healthcare in the community. "The team is humbled to have won this award," he said. "Serving the local community is the cornerstone of our values at Blooms The Chemist and we're so thankful for the local support. "The recognition of being awarded Outstanding Pharmacy highlights the important work our

team provides and the fantastic customers we aim to help every single day." Uppal's Blooms The Chemist Royal Randwick pharmacy was also named as a finalist for the award. The Royal Randwick store was one of the first pharmacies in Australia to launch a drive-through COVID-19 rapid antigen testing facility (PD 05 Oct 2021). **Pictured:** Blooms The Chemist Royal Randwick Retail Manager, Shauna McGrath, with pharmacy owner, Rohit Uppal, Pharmacy Manager, Poli Spiroglou, and Blooms The Chemist Coogee Retail Manager, Mamie Rock.

Queensland GPs busier than ever

QUEENSLAND-BASED GPs are seeing year-on-year increases in patient attendances, new data reveals. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic general practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) across the State have witnessed growth in patient activity when comparing Mar 2019 with the same period this year. Brisbane North Primary Care Network (PHN) CEO, Libby Dunstan, noted that there has been an 11.5% increase in chronic disease management presentations, while the number of patients seeking mental healthcare has grown by 10.6%. Dunstan noted that immunisers in the Brisbane North PHN had administered more than one million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, highlighting the critical role primary care providers have played during the pandemic. "They have been a pillar of strength in the community," she said.

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