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Lagevrio listed on PBS

MSD'S oral COVID-19 treatment, Lagevrio (molnupiravir) is now available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

The move follows the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee's recommendation that the medication be listed for patients in high-risk groups who have tested positive for COVID-19 (*PD* 28 Feb).

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, welcomed the decision to fast-track the listing of Lagevrio as an important step in providing treatment for people with COVID-19.

"This is a great a solution for the care of patients and the management of the disease," Twomey said.

"This should be the forerunner of other treatments being made available on the PBS and I urge other companies with treatments to follow the process to achieve Section 85 listing.

"Having these treatments available on the PBS is in the best interests of patients across the whole country."

Brisbane-based Infectious Disease specialist, Dr Paul Griffin also said the listing of the first oral COVID-19

treatment on the PBS was a positive move for patients.

"Access to an oral treatment through the PBS will allow many at-risk people to be treated at home, which is a win-win-win for these patients, the community and our hospital system," he said.

"Taken twice daily for five days, Lagevrio is likely to play an important role in treating eligible, at-risk patients diagnosed with COVID-19."

With Pfizer's oral COVID-19 treatment, Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir and ritonavir), also approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, Twomey called on all companies with COVID-19 treatments to apply for their products to be listed on the PBS as soon as possible.

"Patients are asking for these treatments, and as we move into the phase of management of the disease, access to these medicines is essential," he said.

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news and a full page from **Good Price Pharmacy**.

NQPHN drops out of NQPSP

THE North Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) has become the latest group to walk away from the North Queensland Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot (NQPSP).

In a statement issued to ABC News, the network's CEO, Robin Whyte, said it had decided to withdraw from the NQPSP's steering committee, after reviewing its participation in the program.

The move followed similar steps taken by medical bodies and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) in recent weeks (*PD* 24 Feb).

The ABC reported that NQPHN Chair, Alive Pharmacy Warehouse Founder, Nick Loukas, voluntarily stepped down from the trial's steering group on 21 Feb, "in order to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest".

The pilot is expected to be rolled out across 37 local government areas in the coming months.

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Guild opens 2022 PATY nominations

NOMINATIONS for the 2022 Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (PATY) open today.

The award recognises pharmacy assistants' skills, knowledge, leadership and customer service over a 12-month period.

Nominees will be short-listed to take part in a virtual State Workshop where a State winner will be selected to represent their

State or Territory at a face-to-face National Judging Workshop to be held in Brisbane in Oct.

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



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Dispensary Corner

APPARENTLY it's a real disease, with doctors and medicines and everything.

A woman in the USA has raised awareness of the extremely rare "uncombable hair syndrome" by launching an Instagram account for her extremely cute - but messy-haired one-year-old son named Locklan (pictured).

The genetic issue is only suffered by about 100 people worldwide, with the boy's mother Katelyn Sample saying she was told about it by a stranger who saw a photo of the child online.

The rare abnormality usually only affects kids between three months and three years, although US ABC News says there have been reports in children aged up to 12.

It's apparently related to the hair having a triangular, rather than round, cross-section.

The report noted that although it can be diagnosed via a genetic test, there are no formal treatments for uncombable hair syndrome, with the condition tending to resolve itself over time.



Pharmacy flood warning

PHARMACY owners are being urged to take steps to protect their patients, staff and property as flood waters hit towns across south east Queensland and northern NSW.

Pharmacy Insurance specialist, Carollo Horton and Associates CEO, Giuseppe Carollo, told *Pharmacy Daily* that with severe weather intensifying in the region store owners and managers needed to "be safe".

"Be sure that you and your staff are safe," he said.

"Don't cross flooded roads to get to your store and follow all the local safety advice.

"From an insurance perspective, pharmacies need to try to minimise further damage where they can.

"Have a think about 'What are your most valuable contents, items and stock lines? Are they in a safe location up high? Are your computers and financial records backed up and accessible?'"

Carollo added that pharmacists needed to focus on their most vulnerable patients, "think of those who may be due for a repeat this week and how you may be able to



assist them".

With the flooding event expected to be defined as an "insurance catastrophe", Carollo said that claims from affected clients would be prioritised by insurers, adding that some policies would also cover a pharmacy's loss of income for the period that it is closed as a result of flooding.

"Business Interruption cover will also be triggered when you lodge your claim," he said.

Carollo urged owners and managers of impacted pharmacies to take "lots of photos" of any flood damage and to start to clean up what they can while waiting for assistance.

Community back Blooms' fundraiser

BLOOMS The Chemist's Coogee and Royal Randwick stores have combined to raise \$2,500 for the Sydney Children's Hospital, with the support of suppliers and the local community.

Blooms Royal Randwick owner, Rohit Uppal, said the fundraising campaign was set up in response to a Facebook post by one of the hospital's nurses asking for people to donate toys for sick children in the lead up to Christmas.

"We instantly established a

fundraising program in Blooms The Chemist Coogee and Blooms The Chemist Royal Randwick and set up a toy drop-off area," he said.

"The local community really got behind our efforts, which helped us beat our target of \$2,000.

"We also secured a plethora of toys, which will bring much joy to the children."

Uppal added that it was important for the community pharmacy sector to support hospital workers.

Guild Update

APP 2022: three weeks to go!

IT'S only three weeks to go before APP2022 - the annual event that brings together community pharmacy professionals from across Australia - kicks off on the Gold Coast.

Being held 24-27 Mar 2022 on the Gold Coast, this year's expert speakers will include Queensland's Chief Health Officer, Dr John Gerrard.

Dr Gerrard's presentation, scheduled at 4pm on Friday 25 Mar, is titled *Mobilising a nation: COVID-19 vaccination program - the role of pharmacy & where to from here?*

The session will also feature Managing Director of Pfizer Australia and New Zealand, Anne Harris, Medical Director Australia & NZ (Asia Pacific) of Moderna Australia, Lynn Sartori, and Guild National President, Professor Trent Twomey.

This session will provide a retrospective examination of the role of pharmacists, and the lessons learnt. An update on vaccine boosters will also be provided.

With a short time to go before the conference starts, attendees are encouraged to [register](#) and book their accommodation quickly.

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