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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus full front page from TerryWhite Chemmart.

Green light given for API takeover

THE Federal Court of Australia has issued orders approving the Scheme of Arrangement under which Wesfarmers will acquire pharmacy wholesaler, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API).

The Court gave the deal the green light, after API shareholder voted overwhelmingly in support of the acquisition bid last week (PD 18 Mar).

The Scheme is expected to be implemented on 31 Mar, when shareholders will receive \$1.50 per share.

Guild calls for action on meds costs

WITH cost of living and health issues set to dominate this year's federal election campaign, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia is urging the Government to "immediately" slash the general Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) co-payment.

In a statement released over the weekend, Guild National President, Trent Twomey, said there was an urgent need to address issues around medicines affordability, with Australian Bureau of Statistics data showing 900,000 people had delayed getting prescriptions filled due to the cost of buying the medicines.

"This is a damning situation, but it is one which the Government has the power to act on – and act on immediately," he said.

"Making medicines more affordable will also translate into a long-term saving by improving people's health and reducing the burden on the broader hospital and

health system.

"Instead of fiddling around with tokenistic handouts, the Government must fix a situation which is affecting the health and wellbeing of hardworking Australians.

"People are struggling to afford essentials and going without their medicines should never be a decision people have to make. In 2022, Australians demand – and deserve – better."

Meanwhile, the Guild has dismissed claims, highlighted in the *Herald Sun*, that a \$250,000 donation to the Australian Labor Party's Victorian Branch made on 29 Apr 2019, was made with a request that the funding be used in Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt's electorate of Flinders.

The donation, which was paid for an event where senior Guild officials were able to meet then Labor Leader, Bill Shorten, accounted for just under 33% of the \$773,791 the



Guild gave to political parties in the 2018/19 financial year, and was the largest single contribution made in the lead up to the last election, with polls predicting Labor would claim victory.

"Paid attendance at events and functions and over time its support of political parties doesn't favour either side of politics," a Guild spokesperson said.

"How funds raised by political parties, through events is spent is up to the relevant political party.

"It would be inappropriate and untruthful to suggest that the Guild dictated where such funds should or could be spent."

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Abbott infant formula recall

ABBOTT Australasia Pty Ltd has initiated recalls of a batches of its EleCare, Similac and Alimentum infant formula products, in relation to potential microbial contamination.

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Drop pharmacist Rx plans: RACGP

PLANS to authorise pharmacist prescribing for 23 health conditions as part of a trial in North Queensland will result in poorer outcomes for patients, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) warns.

The College has called on the Queensland Government to "abandon" its proposed North Queensland Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot (NQPSPP) and launch an inquiry into the ongoing Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) Pharmacy Pilot - Queensland (UTIPP-Q).

The RACGP noted that GPs reported concerning incidents of patients being incorrectly prescribed antibiotics as part of the UTIPP-Q program, including one patient in her 20s being interviewed by a pharmacist within earshot of other customers and "upsold products including cranberry tablets", only to be diagnosed with chlamydia by her GP at a later date.

RACGP President, Dr Karen Price, said the State Government needed

to walk away from pharmacist prescribing plans to avoid fragmenting patient care.

"I am urging the Queensland Government in the strongest possible terms to immediately change course on the planned NQPSPP," she said.

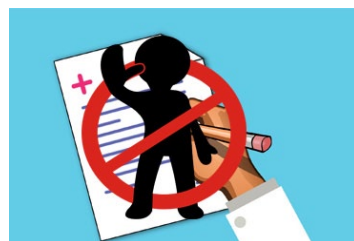
"If the Government is to proceed with the pilot, we should be looking at pharmacists working as part of a team in the hospital or medical practice setting, rather than in an unsupervised retail space.

"The RACGP has previously pushed for team-based models of care, including general practice-based pharmacists.

"Conducting the pilot in retail spaces means that there will be insufficient training and supervision for the pharmacists.

"The pilot needs to be focussed on the needs of the community, rather than generating profits for pharmacy owners at the expense of their customers and pharmacists.

"Patient health and wellbeing must



come first.

Our communities deserve safe and quality healthcare from appropriately qualified health professionals.

The incidents emerging from the UTI pilot highlight just how dangerous it is to authorise non-medical health professionals to provide services they simply are not trained to provide in an unsupervised retail setting.

"We simply do not know how many patients have suffered negative health outcomes resulting from this pilot because the details are not being made public and we need to get to the bottom of it right away."

SA's new Premier urged to act on health

SOUTH Australia's newly elected Premier, Peter Malinauskas, is being urged to implement legislation to optimise the use of pharmacists' skills in the state.

Welcoming Malinauskas's election, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) SA Branch President, Robyn John, called on the incoming Government to implement the PSA's pre-election recommendations (PD 18 Mar).

"These recommendations include embedding pharmacists in residential aged care facilities, enabling pharmacists to administer medicines by injection with an expanded range of

vaccines, providing funding to employ pharmacists in Aboriginal Health Clinics across the state, and employing transition of care pharmacists in all South Australian hospitals.

"Of these recommendations, raising the standard of care for vulnerable residents in the state's aged care facilities is of particular importance to us.

"Embedding pharmacists in aged care is the obvious solution to addressing long-standing issues like polypharmacy and chemical restraint in aged care facilities and their involvement in these settings has proven beneficial."

Pharmacies caught short

PHARMACIES in Western Australia are counting the costs of the State Government's \$580 million COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) giveaway.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia WA Branch Director, Matthew Tweedie, told *The West Australian* that after investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in sourcing RATs they will now have to sell them at a loss, following the Government's decision to give them away.

"They can't compete with free," he said.

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TWC celebrates 500th store opening

TERRYWHITE Chemmart (TWC), is aiming to continue to expand its network after opening its 500th store on Sat.

TWC Matraville Managing Partner, Moses Injejikian, was joined by TWC Founders, Terry and Rhonda White, TWC Executive General Manager, Nick Munroe, EBOS CEO, John Cullity, Australian Labor Party MP for Kingsford Smith, Matt Thistlethwaite, and City of Randwick Mayor, Dylan Parker, to mark the milestone.

Injejikian said it was an honour to represent the network's 500th pharmacy, noting the brand's focus on delivering services had attracted the store's owners to the group.

"I am so proud to be part of the 500th pharmacy in the TWC network," he said.

"The growth and reputation of the brand combined with their strong focus on health services is a key reason we joined TWC.



"We look forward to helping TWC grow even stronger."

Munroe noted that over the last 12 months the group has expanded by 41 stores, driven by the value the brand creates for its network partners.

"The store network's trading performance has also been strong with gross profit growth of approximately 7% and prescription sales growth of approximately

10%," he said.

"The momentum is very positive and we have no intention of slowing down and now 600 pharmacies are well in our sights.

"We want every Australian to benefit from our healthcare programs and services and be able to access us within 10 minutes of their home."

See today's **cover page** for more from TWC.

Guild workforce capability survey

THE Australian Friendly Societies Pharmacies Association (AFSPA) is encouraging its members to participate in the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Workforce Capability Project.

AFSPA members can complete the Guild's survey, which aims to look at the sector broadly to provide essential information about the issues around attracting and retaining talent in the community pharmacy sector.

The organisation also urged its members to provide feedback in relation to workforce challenges, reporting instances where they have had to limit trading hours due to a lack of pharmacists, or having to close stores because they have not been able to recruit staff.

CLICK HERE for the survey.

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Dispensary Corner

AMERICANS are once again front and centre when it comes to dangerous "remedies" for the pandemic virus, with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issuing a special safety communication about misuse of at-home COVID-19 tests.

The agency said it had received a number of reports of adverse outcomes after people incorrectly used the reagent which is part of the tests, including sticking it up their nose or using it as eye drops.

"The liquid test solution is not supposed to touch your body," the FDA warned, adding that children had also been injured after swallowing the liquid.

FDA-authorized at-home tests use similar technology to Rapid Antigen Tests, with nasal swab samplings intended to be combined with the solution and dripped onto a test card.

"The liquid solution in some tests may contain chemicals like sodium azide, which may cause harm if swallowed or if it comes in contact with skin, nose, mouth or eyes," the FDA noted.

"Keep all parts of at-home COVID-19 test kits out of reach from children and pets before and after use," the agency recommended, urging users to read instructions carefully, not touch the liquid solution and "use only the swab in the test kit to collect a nasal sample".



Another Cap Chem win



CAPITAL Chemist Chisholm has added the 2021 Australian Small Business Champion Pharmacy title to its collection of accolades.

The ACT-based store, which won the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's prestigious Pharmacy of the Year Award in 2020, also took out the 2020 Canberra Local Business Awards Pharmacy of the Year (**PD** 18 Dec 2020).

The Capital Chemist team saw off competition from seven other

stores to claim the pharmacy title.

Capital Chemist Chisholm proprietor, Rebecca Young (**pictured centre**) was presented with the latest award at the Australian Small Business Champion Gala Dinner at The Star Sydney on Sat.

The Chisholm store became the second successive Capital Chemist Group franchise to take the Australian Small Business honour, after Capital Chemist Kingston won the 2020 title (**PD** 01 Mar 2021).

Pharmacist's COVAX suspension appeal

SUSPENDED Victorian pharmacist, Maria Stogiannis, has been described as a "serious risk" to public health over her views about the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (COVAX), by the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

Representing the Board at a Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal hearing last week, barrister, Ben Jellis, said Stogiannis had described the shot as a "bioweapon" and questioned if "we may be witnessing the greatest organised mass murder in the

history of the world", the *Herald Sun* reported.

A "friend" representing Stogiannis, told the Tribunal that there was "no free country called Australia" and said that the suspension should be overturned to allow her return to work, to support customers who "literally love her".

The Tribunal rejected Stogiannis's application to hear her case, and denied her application for an injunction to enable her to restore her professional registration.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Morag Horton**, 2021 Rhonda White Leadership Award Nominee, TerryWhite Chemmart Melbourne St, SA.



Taking pharmacy outside the four walls

THERE are many ways we can extend our knowledge and skills beyond our four walls to drive change and support specialised areas.

I am a Member of the Fertility Society of Australia (FSA) and Fertility Nurses of Australia (FNA) and my pharmacy in Melbourne Street, South Australia has a speciality practice in IVF and Fertility Pharmacy Service.

We provide a high-level service for IVF and fertility clients involving attendance at offsite fertility group meetings, training events and conferences or participation in FNA workshops, where we present sessions on medication and prescribing for fertility nurses and clinicians.

We dedicate much of our time to this area of practice helping us now to become recognised as a destination for fertility and IVF support.

As medicine experts, we can lend our expertise to specialised areas demonstrating the breadth of support we can provide to our allied health community and the community at large.