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AUSTRALIAN OWNED

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

Judgement due in PharmX case

THE Victorian Supreme Court is expected to hand down its judgement on the dispute between pharmacy software providers Corum Group and FredIT, over distributions from PharmX early in 2023.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) this morning, Corum reported that following an eight-day hearing earlier this month, the proceedings were finally concluded with oral submissions from both parties on 23 Nov.

Corum initiated the proceedings in May 2021, claiming FredIT had received a share of distributions from PharmX for the 2014 to 2019 financial years, which it should not have been given, due to a change of control at FredIT (PD 07 Dec 2021).

FredIT has countered with claims for unpaid distributions for FY20, during which it ceased to be a security holder in PharmX, and Corum became sole owner of the platform.



PBAC updates COVID antiviral advice

NEW recommendations regarding the use of COVID-19 antivirals, Lagevrio (molnupiravir) and Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir and ritonavir), have been issued by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC).

Following the release of a preliminary analysis of the UK's PANORAMIC trial which found Lagevrio plus usual care for community treatment of adults with COVID-19 was associated with an increased risk of adverse outcomes than usual care alone, the Committee has recommended that an administrative note be added to the medication's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listing, stating it "should be considered for use only if nirmatrelvir and ritonavir is contraindicated or otherwise unsuitable".

"The PBAC observed that subjects in PANORAMIC were, as a whole, younger than subjects receiving molnupiravir in Australia," the



Committee said.

"Two-thirds of PBS utilisation of molnupiravir has been in patients 70 years of age or older, whereas less than 15% of PANORAMIC subjects were 70 years of age or older.

"Also, patients at highest risk of progression to severe disease in the UK were not the target population in PANORAMIC."

In response to correspondence from Queensland Health, the PBAC has recommended that the PBS

listings for Lagevrio and Paxlovid be amended to provide access to "patients with any significantly immunocompromising condition where in the last 12 months, the patient has received anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody treatment".

The Committee has also backed calls for the antivirals to be made available through the PBS for patients who have previously been hospitalised with COVID-19 if they are subsequently reinfected.

No PBS cannabis

A MOTION calling on the Federal Government to make natural, whole plant, Australian medical cannabis available to any Australian with a medical need, by doctor's prescription, filled by a pharmacist on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), proposed by One Nation Senator, Malcolm Roberts, has been rejected by the Senate.

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Tassie pharmacists ready to step up

TASMANIAN Premier, Jeremy Rockliff's decision to task the State's Department of Health to immediately look at ways to extend pharmacists' role in the provision of health services (*PD* 24 Nov), is being welcomed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Responding to the announcement Guild Tasmanian Branch President, Helen O'Byrne, said pharmacists were ready to "step up" and provide the same services as their peers in Queensland and NSW.

"Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) last week highlights more people are waiting longer to see a GP for urgent medical care, especially those living in outer regional, remote, or very remote areas than those living in major cities," she said.

"We know that Tasmania is experiencing severe GP shortages not only in regional areas across the state but also in the outer suburbs of Hobart, which are growing in population and therefore

experiencing higher demand."

O'Byrne noted that pharmacists in other jurisdictions around the country have been given the green light to administer a broader range of vaccinations, including travel vaccines, shingles, human papillomavirus (HPV) and Japanese encephalitis.

"It makes sense to expand pharmacists' vaccination scope in Tasmania, given the numbers of community pharmacies already offering vaccination services", O'Byrne said.

"Pharmacists should be able to initiate vaccinations based on clinical need, without the need for a prescription from a GP, given the issues in accessing a GP in the first instance."

O'Byrne said the Tasmanian Government's Pharmacy Scope of Practice Review - which is due to commence next year - would deliver positive outcomes for patients and pharmacists, she called on the Premier to follow



other states' lead in implementing pharmacists prescribing programs.

"Tasmanians should not have to wait for the results of the review for initiatives that have already been proven successful in other Australian jurisdictions to be implemented," she said.

"Just like their interstate counterparts Tasmanian community pharmacists are ready to extend their range of professional services right now."

Magnetic mask concerns

PATIENTS with active implantable medical devices, such as pacemakers, and who also use CPAP or BiPAP therapy are being urged to keep any mask with magnets 16cm away from their implants, by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The regulator issued the warning after it was made aware that some face and nasal masks used for CPAP and BiPAP treatment may contain high strength magnetic clips to hold them in place.

The TGA noted that the "magnets could potentially interact with certain implanted medical devices", and "may cause active implantable devices to malfunction or result in movement of other implanted devices".

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Wrestling pharmacy bandit denied bail

A QUEENSLANDER who broke into a pharmacy in Mount Morgan, stealing 147 packets of medication, before wrestling staff, will remain behind bars until his sentencing hearing on 09 Dec.

Police prosecutor, Senior Constable Sarah Rowe, described Nigel Ray Haplin's behaviour as "concerning" at a hearing of Rockhampton Magistrates Court earlier this week.

The Court heard the 42-year-old had a seven-page criminal record, and had been handed a 12-month jail sentence on 06 Jun 2021.

Magistrate, Philippa Beckinsale, rejected an application for bail, made by Haplin's lawyer, Samantha Legrady, who noted that he had recently been put on a suboxone program for opioid addiction, which he planned to continue.

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Dispensary Corner

A TASMANIAN flower farmer has avoided being in hot water, after accidentally growing opium poppies for her customers.

Kate Dixon, who runs a commercial flower farm on a property outside of Hobart, this year planted a field of what she thought were pink poppy seeds.

However after reviewing some of her social media photos, officials from the state's environment department got in contact, reports the ABC.

"I had an unexpected call from the department saying they'd seen some of my photos on Instagram and suspected that they were restricted poppies that you need a licence to grow in Tasmania," she said.

An inspector from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment took samples of the blooms, with subsequent testing confirming she had inadvertently used two restricted species for her crop, *Papaver somniferum* and *Papaver bracteatum*.

Authorised farmers in Tasmania grow crops of these varieties on behalf of pharmaceutical companies, which extract chemicals to create medications like morphine and codeine.

A spokesperson for the Department said "when prohibited poppies have been found in a garden setting, in the first instance our preferred approach is generally education, awareness and to engage with the owner".

Ego lands five CHP Self-Care Awards

EGO Pharmaceuticals took home a haul of five Consumer Health Products Australia (CHP) Self-Care Excellence Awards on Wed, including the Most Trusted Partner in Pharmacy (over \$100 million), which it shared with iNova Pharmaceuticals.

The company landed the Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) Excellence (over \$100 million) Award, while claiming the CHP's two new honours, the Innovative Manufacturing Solution Award, for its water diversion initiative, and the Environmental Sustainability Award, for its etchðos range.

Ego's etchðos products also landed the Outstanding and Innovative New Consumer Healthcare Product Award.

Church & Dwight took out the Most Trusted Partner in Pharmacy (under \$100 million) and the QUM Excellence (under \$100 million) Awards.

Allergan landed the Most Preferred Supplier (under \$100 million) Award, while generics and private label over-the-counter medicine giant, Arrotex Pharmaceuticals took home the Most Preferred Supplier (over \$100 million) title.

CHP CEO, Dr Deon Schoombie, said the Self-Care Excellence Awards recognised marketing and sales best practice, new products, manufacturing innovation and, sustainability initiatives which have contributed to excellence in self-care.

"Our judges are always looking to reward leading-edge creative work,



innovation and best practice, and it is encouraging to see that even in such a turbulent year, the field was particularly competitive," he said.

"I encourage the industry to continue to strive for excellence over the coming year."

Stops to take Blackmores Chair

BLACKMORES Limited Chair and Non-Executive Director, Anne Templeman-Jones has announced her decision to step down from both roles.

Templeman-Jones, who was appointed as Chair in Oct 2020, will be succeeded by Independent Non-Executive Director, Wendy Stops.

Stops is also a Non-Executive Director of the Board of Coles Group Limited, having previously served as a Non-Executive Director of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Altium Limited, and brings significant experience to the role.

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