

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

Robot to deliver

SPRINGFIELD, Queensland's new Mater hospital will be equipped with a state-of-the-art robotic pharmacy system that will deliver around '100,000 prescriptions a year to patients and medical staff within minutes', *Mirage* has reported.

The \$450,000 investment is being made possible by Mater Foundation - the charity that funds new equipment, services and research across the state's Mater hospitals.

The BD ROWA Vmax-160 pharmacy robotic and inventory dispensing system automatically picks and directs dispensed medicines to each pharmacist's workstation via chutes and conveyor belts, as opposed to the pharmacist walking to the shelves to identify and collect the medicines, explained Mater Private Hospital Springfield Pharmacy Manager Nirmal Panneerselvam.

Sit down, talk and listen, says Lambie

SENATOR Jacqui Lambie has blasted the Federal Health Minister over the "unintended consequences" of the 60-DD policy in Parliament this week, and called on the minister to "put on his big-boy pants and sit down with the pharmacists and talk to them again - talk and listen. Get this right".

"I tell you what, the unintended consequences in the future for these smaller pharmacists will wipe them out, and I can tell you that no patient, no doctor and no pharmacy is going to win out of this.

"It will send us into a spiralling crisis," slammed the MP from Tasmania.

"You need to either come up with a compensation scheme for those people losing out or bring the pharmacists back to the table and get this right.

"I can assure you that this bill is not right. You need to look at the unintended consequences and meet them head on."

From Sep, six million Australians will have some of their prescription bill "cut in half," Lambie said.

The government says it will save those Australians \$1.6 billion a year. "That \$1.6 billion in savings has

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to come from somewhere, and that somewhere is the pharmacies, unfortunately," Lambie explained.

Several House of Representatives MPs too have expressed their concern about the double dispensing measure in Parliament this week.

However, some MPs are in

support of the measure such as Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah who said the "more conservative estimate of 60 days...strikes the right balance for the community and for the pharmacy sector".

"For those concerned about viability because they will lose their co-payments, which in my community amounts to around \$180,000 a year, they are justifiably concerned.

"However, what this means for patients is a significant saving of \$180 per medicine per year... and data shows that extending dispensing for chronic medications increases compliance by 20%."

Vaccine awareness campaign launched

OVER the last week, 32,994 cases of COVID-19 were reported across the country with an average of 4,713 cases per day, and a 5.4% increase in hospitalisations.

To raise awareness and urge Australians to get up to date with their six-month COVID-19 booster and flu vaccinations *Anywhere and Anytime - COVID-19 and Influenza can catch you*, was launched this week by the not-for-profit Immunisation Coalition.

CEO Kim Sampson explained, "as many people enjoy social events this winter, whether that is the AFL, FIFA Women's World Cup, interstate, or overseas holidays, or simply catch public transport to work, COVID-19 and Influenza may catch up with you for the ride.

"COVID-19 and Influenza do not discriminate by age or gender, so it's important to protect yourself and loved ones at all times this winter.

"Now is the time to get both

your COVID-19 and Flu vaccines to stay well during the colder months," Sampson said.

"Influenza is a highly contagious disease, and many parents are not aware that flu can cause serious illness in normal healthy children and can have serious implications for those most vulnerable in our community.

"We know vaccines save lives, however, many Australians underestimate the benefits vaccinations have on our health and wellbeing, now and into the future.

"The best thing people can do right now is speak to their pharmacist or a GP to discuss which vaccines are recommended for them and their family," he said.

"Generally, COVID-19 vaccination rates are particularly poor, as are influenza vaccination rates in children under five years of age, suggesting a potential increasing of pressure on our national healthcare system," Sampson concluded.

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Brains of Gen Z

THE arrival of Generation Z (Gen Z) in the professional realm has presented a unique challenge for employers.

Understanding and effectively engaging Gen Z requires a comprehensive understanding of their developmental characteristics and the impact of their digital upbringing, says neurologist Dr Patrick Aouad, who will be speaking at the Workplace Wellness Festival, on 20-21 Jun in Sydney.

Several crucial neurological factors shape the Gen Z brain, explained Aouad, including "an underdeveloped Prefrontal Cortex, responsible for decision-making and impulse control, which is still developing in Gen Z individuals".

Consequently, they may exhibit heightened impulsivity and limited risk assessment capabilities, he added.

Further, digital immersion and the Dopamine-reward system show that growing up immersed in a digital world, Gen Z's brains have adapted to a constant influx of highly engaging stimuli.

"This immersion has unregulated their brain's dopamine-reward system, resulting in decreased attention spans and a preference for instant gratification over long-term goals," Aouad explained.

With many starting their careers during the pandemic returning to face-to-face work is another challenge.

Trade show sold out for joint events

THE Pharmacy Connect trade exhibition has already sold out for this year, Convenor Kos Sclavos has announced.

The Pharmacy Guild's annual conference, which will be held between 31 Aug - 02 Sep in Sydney, attracts more than 800 pharmacists, pharmacy owners, pharmacy managers, interns, pharmacy students and pharmaceutical industry representatives.

For the first time, Pharmacy Connect will be held in conjunction with the Pharmacy Assistant National Conference, also an annual Pharmacy Guild event which has been educating pharmacy

assistants for more than 20 years.

The two events will share the trade exhibition plus social functions, including a Welcome Reception and Cocktail Party, where the national winner of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year Award will be announced.

Sclavos said that the 2023 trade exhibition will be the biggest in both events' history.

"We are thrilled that the trade exhibition has reached capacity!

"Attendees at both conferences will experience the latest industry products and services, meet with existing suppliers, and interact with potential new suppliers.

"The expo will showcase industry products and services from a record 59 suppliers including wholesalers, pharmacy services, front-of-pharmacy categories, complementary medicines, IT, prescription-only medicines and scheduled medicines.

"Importantly, entry to the trade is free, so those pharmacists and pharmacy assistants who can't commit to attending the full event can visit the trade show at no cost," shared Sclavos.

He also commented on the timing of Pharmacy Connect in regard to the 2023 Labor Government budget announcements and its impact on community pharmacy and said pharmacists could not afford to miss this year's event.

"The situation is very fluid and the allocated time slots in the conference program to cover this critical topic will ensure you are in the best position to be kept informed to make relevant decisions.

"I encourage representatives from all elements of the pharmacy supply chain to be in attendance at Pharmacy Connect."

Early bird registration for Pharmacy Connect is now open until 28 Jul.

To view the full program and to register, visit <https://pharmacy-connect.com.au>.

Early bird registration for the Pharmacy Assistant National Conference, which saves delegates \$65 off the full registration fee, is also open until 28 Jul.

To view the full program and to register **VISIT HERE**.

I have 'never come across' anything like it

JENNIFER Nelson of Coady's Pharmacy at Caringbah, Sydney, said her customers would be worse off with the 60-DD policy, as reported in the *Leader*.

"I'm going to have to look at the hours I keep my pharmacy open and the services I provide.

"I don't want to be in a position of closing earlier and not being there for my patients when they need vital medicine and support," shared Nelson.

She said even well-established pharmacies would struggle, and they may be forced to also slash front-line services.

"We were established in 1946. I've been an owner for over 20 years after taking over in 2003, and in two decades, I've never come across cost-saving measures that we will have to fund," she said.

"If it goes ahead as the budget predicted, we'd have to cut staffing hours.

"We couldn't offer the services we offer for free like Justice of the Peace, and things we've always done like blood pressure checks and free advice for customers.

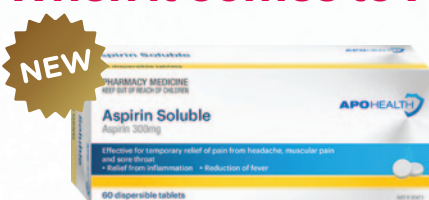
"We'd also have to charge for home deliveries.

"I can understand the convenience of 60-day dispensing, but what the government is failing to tell the public is that we are footing the bill.

"We are getting a 30-day dispense fee but providing 60 days, which in essence cuts our funding - our dispensary income, in half.

"As a small business in today's economic climate, who can survive that?" said Nelson.

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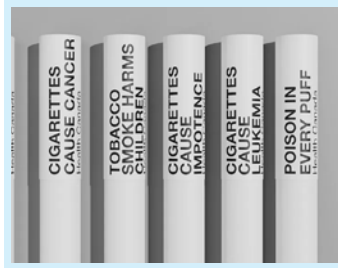


Dispensary Corner

AUTHORITIES in Canada have announced a world-first anti-smoking initiative, which will see every individual cigarette labelled with a health warning. The new packaging, which comes into effect on 01 Aug this year, will feature not-so-inspirational phrases (pictured) such as "Poison in every puff," "Cigarettes Cause Cancer" and "Tobacco Smoke Harms Children".

Health Canada said the move "will make it virtually impossible to avoid health warnings" on tobacco products, with the update following a public consultation period as part of measures aiming to halve smoking rates in the country to just 5% by 2035.

"We are taking action by being the first country in the world to label individual cigarettes with health warning levels," said Canada's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Carolyn Bennett, who noted that tobacco use continues to kill 48,000 Canadians every year. The new regulations will be phased in, initially applying to king-size cigarettes by the end of Jul 2024, followed by regular-size cigarettes and "little cigars with tipping paper, and tubes" by the end of Apr 2025.



Putting his heart into care for battlers

ONCE again demonstrating a pharmacy's connection to help its community in the moments that matter, Blooms The Chemist Casey Central in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs has expanded an initiative to help women who are struggling financially during these tough economic times and has also launched a new initiative for children in the area.

Pharmacist owner Andrew Leslie (pictured with his staff) and the organiser of these two charitable programs, said he had identified a need in his local community - in particular among women from the local Afghan refugee population in Casey City - who were struggling to afford even the basic pharmacy products.

"I noticed a lot of mums in the community were hesitant to purchase pharmacy products because they had no resources," Leslie said.

So he and his pharmacy team relaunched a program they call 'Women United,' a charity fund to which community members and customers can donate, and the pharmacy matches the full donation amount dollar for dollar.

"Women in the community who



are struggling financially can then access these funds to buy essential items ranging from period care products such as pads and tampons to hair and skincare products," Leslie said.

Another new initiative the team at Casey Central launched recently called, 'No Child Left Behind', attracts community-wide financial and product donations, again matched by the pharmacy, to ensure local children whose families may be struggling can still

get access to health and wellbeing care, support and products.

"We know how often parents visit a pharmacy to purchase items for children, especially during the colder months of the year, for basics such as throat lozenges, Panadol, and topical creams.

"These can add up to quite a bit throughout the Melbourne winter season," Leslie added, who is also the owner of Blooms The Chemist in Daylesford (Victoria) and Glenorchy (Tasmania).

Confidence dips

ANZ-ROY Morgan Consumer Confidence fell by 3.1 points to 72.7 this week and is now at its lowest since early Apr 2020.

The index has now spent 15 straight weeks below the mark of 80, the longest stretch below 80 since the index began in Oct 2008.

The last time Consumer Confidence spent 15 weeks below 80 was during the 1990-91 recession.

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