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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of the latest pharmacy news.

## Renew registration

THE pharmacy board, Ahpra, is asking pharmacists to renew their general or non-practising registration before 30 Nov, or risk getting a late fee.

Pharmacists will soon receive an email from Ahpra providing access to its online renewal services or can access it, [HERE](#).

Ahpra states, "if you submit your application on time, or during the following one-month late period, you can continue practising while your application is assessed".

"If you don't renew before the end of the late period, 31 Dec, your registration will lapse, you'll be removed from the register of practitioners, and you won't be able to use the protected title, pharmacist."

# 10 ECPs to be part of 'paradigm shift'

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has appointed 10 Early Career Pharmacists (ECPs) from around Australia to lead the ECP Community of Specialty Interest (CSI), and support ECP Board Director Ayomide Ogundipe (pictured), who is also the CSI Chair.

The ECP CSI will be led, besides Ogundipe, by Abby Richardson, Elissar Mansour, Erin Cooper, Jala Moushi, James Buckley, Keiran Batavia, Monique Licht, Raymond Truong, and Shaylee Mills.

Ogundipe celebrated the diverse range of skills and experience each leader can bring to the team and commented, "working closely with the CSI leadership team, we are continuing to build and foster peer support through mentoring & engagement with ECPs across all states and territories, and policy and advocacy".

"Our profession is seeing a paradigm shift in practice and scope, and it is so important that ECPs are part of these discussions moving forward to bring their



diverse insights and experiences to the table," Ogundipe added.

"Through the CSI Early Career Pharmacists we have a direct avenue to actively engage with the PSA and the broader profession.

"I encourage all pharmacists in the early stages of their careers to get involved and join the CSI."

PSA Chief Executive Officer A/Prof Steve Morris (pictured) also welcomed the ECP leadership team.

"The ECP CSI offers pharmacists in

the early stages of their careers the opportunity to connect with their colleagues and shape the direction of our changing profession," A/Prof Morris explained.

"PSA proudly supports ECPs to get the most out of their careers, from their registration to retirement.

"I am looking forward to continuing our work with Ayomide and her team to ensure that PSA is best supporting pharmacists at all stages of their careers." JG

## Seniors should book a COVID booster

THE Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) yesterday updated its advice for the COVID-19 booster dose.

ATAGI has suggested that if it has been six months since receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, an additional dose is recommended for people aged 75 or older.

A booster should also be considered for people aged 65-74, following discussion with their healthcare provider, as

being older continues to be the biggest risk factor for severe COVID-19 disease.

Aged care residents who have not yet received a booster dose this year are advised to do so.

ATAGI says to find a COVID-19 vaccine clinic, customers can speak to a doctor or pharmacist.

Customers can also text 'Hey EVA' to 0481 611 382 for a callback, and to book an appointment, [CLICK HERE](#).

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## Dispensary Corner

**COMEDIAN** Hamish Blake may be one of Australia's most popular personalities - but apparently not with the country's GPs.

A light-hearted quip on his podcast recently saw him joke that being a general practitioner was the highest-paying job that he could do competently.

While doctors spend years at medical school, he suggested he'd be able to muddle through for at least one day by doing Google searches for treatments and referring serious cases on.

The statement prompted outrage across the medical community, which even escalated to a mention in the NSW Parliament dubbing the claim as "ridiculous".

Blake quickly responded to the controversy, apologising in another episode which was released late on Wed this week.

"We love to dig in on this show...but in this case I think it's a very, very easy choice to apologise because, obviously we love doctors and would love to see one again," he said.

## New vax to fight Omicron

**PFIZER** Australia and BioNTech this week announced that the TGA has authorised the companies' Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 in individuals five years and older.

Omicron XBB sublineages account for the majority of COVID-19 cases found globally.

Although Omicron BA.4/BA.5-adapted bivalent COVID-19 vaccines provide some protection against a range of outcomes from XBB-related COVID-19, evidence suggests that vaccines better matched to currently circulating virus strains can help further improve protection against symptomatic and severe COVID-19, informed a statement.

"We welcome the TGA's decision and commend them for their careful assessment of the latest version of Comirnaty," said Dr Krishan Thiru, Pfizer Australia & New Zealand Medical Director.

"This decision reaffirms our commitment to bring a high-quality vaccine against this virus to Australians," he added.

"In 2022, COVID-19 was one of Australia's leading causes of death, right behind heart disease and dementia," Thiru explained.

"With today's decision, an updated vaccine will shortly



become available that helps address multiple Omicron XBB-related sublineages, which currently account for the vast majority of COVID-19 cases uncovered globally."

While Prof Ugur Sahin, CEO and co-Founder of BioNTech commented, "as COVID-19 is expected to adopt a seasonal pattern, similar to other respiratory viruses, we remain committed to providing COVID-19 vaccines that are better matched to relevant circulating virus variants or sublineages to people worldwide".

"The new variant-adapted monovalent vaccine aims to further improve protection against severe illness and hospitalisation caused by Omicron XBB descendent sublineages that differ from prior Omicron strains." JG

## In a world of pain

**THE** latest tranche of the *Mental Health Online Report* highlights that one in five adults and one in seven young people experienced a mental health disorder in the previous 12 months.

Of interest to pharmacists, 4.7 million people or 18% of Australians, filled a mental health-related medication prescription in 2021-22.

There were 44.4 million prescriptions dispensed for mental health-related medications (both subsidised and under co-payment) around the nation.

The majority of prescriptions in Australia were made by GPs (85%) and antidepressants (74%) were the most common mental health-related prescriptions dispensed, the report has uncovered.

A huge \$11.6 billion was spent on mental health services in 2020-21, which amounts to around 7% of the total govt expenditure, according to the report.

In NSW alone, 1.37 million people were dispensed at least one mental health-related medication in the past year.

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