

Thursday 18 Apr 2019

ACT flu vax enhanced

APPROPRIATELY trained community pharmacists in the Australian Capital Territory will now be able to administer the flu vaccination and the whooping cough (pertussis) vaccination to people aged 16 years and over, following an ACT Government announcement.

The previous lower age limit was 18 years.

In addition, ACT community pharmacists will now also have access to the influenza vaccine listed on the National Immunisation Program for those aged 65 years and older.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia ACT Branch President Simon Blacker said the new arrangements would help ensure greater flu vaccination coverage for ACT residents.

"Community immunity is a critical factor in protecting the wider population against the flu, and easier access to vaccinations is a very positive step," Blacker said.

"Community pharmacies are highly accessible in terms of their opening hours and locations and there are minimal wait times in most cases."

The Immunisation Coalition has already reported 183 confirmed flu cases in the ACT this year, he added.

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Qld plots pharmacist scripts

QUEENSLAND Health has confirmed it will operate a state-wide trial seeing pharmacists provide low-risk emergency and repeat prescriptions for the contraceptive pill and antibiotics for urinary tract infections.

The move follows last year's Qld Parliamentary Inquiry into the establishment of a pharmacy council and ownership (**PD** 17 Oct 2018), with the state government yesterday publishing its response to the recommendations.

Implementation of an extended role for pharmacists in medication management, including additions to the scope of immunisations provided and issuing low-risk emergency and repeat prescriptions, will require legislative changes, with the government to "review and evaluate proven models from similar health systems for relevance to Queensland".

Other recommendations accepted include progressing legislative change which would allow Qld pharmacy assistants to handle Schedule 8 drugs, allowing them to participate in the receipt and stocking of dangerous medications.

Training requirements for community and hospital pharmacy

assistants will also be reviewed so that those working in both sectors of the industry undergo the same mandatory basic training.

A recommendation for the establishment of a Queensland Pharmacy Advisory Council has also been accepted, with this new body to provide expert advice to the Minister on ownership and premises standards.

The Council would be funded on a cost recovery basis by the pharmacy sector, and be consulted by the Department of Health on matters including managing transfers of pharmacy ownership and changes to scope of practice for pharmacists and pharmacy assistants.

The Government also accepted a recommendation for the implementation of a risk-based strategy for testing that existing commercial arrangements for pharmacy ownership in Qld are in compliance with the law.

Queensland Health will undertake a wide-ranging review of all transfers relating to current pharmacy ownership arrangements "to ensure equitable application of pharmacy ownership regulation across the sector".

API to stand firm on rental demands

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries (API) has reiterated that despite ongoing growth in its Priceline Pharmacy network, it will "continue its policy of closing stores where landlords persist with unrealistic rental demands".

The company yesterday released its first half financial results (**PD** breaking news), with CEO Richard Vincent saying, if necessary Priceline would open "fewer, more profitable stores".

During the six months to 28 Feb Priceline held its overall market share, with growth in skincare and vitamins and an increase in store numbers to 479, with Vincent saying it was a "solid retail performance in tough conditions" and ongoing strong positive sentiment from franchisees.

API overall reported revenue growth of 6.6% to \$1.98 billion, after adjusting for the impact of slower sales of hepatitis C medicines and PBS reforms.

The company noted the rebuff of its approach to Sigma Healthcare, saying it currently holds 12.95% of its rival and was "currently reviewing its plans in relation to this shareholding".



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Dispensary Corner

BLAMING the TV for bad behaviour is passable for a four-year-old, but at 26 you need to start taking responsibility for your actions.

Chasing a codeine hit, Joseph Aaron Stewart, claimed a Netflix series had sown the seeds for his criminal strategy to obtain the drug, by coercing pharmacy staff into pilfering prescription cough syrup for him.

San Jose newspaper, *The Mercury News*, reported Stewart has received a seven-year jail term for his crime spree.

The paper reported that over a three-month period, Stewart targeted pharmacy staff at stores across six suburbs.

"In some cases, Stewart would hand an employee a note claiming to have a gun and then demand the medication and sometimes money," the paper reported.

"In other cases he would jump over the counter to look for the cough syrup. In one case he stole \$20 from an employee's purse."

The crime spree ended in Sep when he robbed a CVS store, with staff reporting "a man pointed an apparent handgun at the staff, jumped over the pharmacy counter and looted the controlled substances area", the paper reported.

Prior to sentencing, Stewart told a probation officer that he got the idea to rob pharmacies from a TV program he streamed, claiming the loss of his job combined with the breakdown of a relationship led him to abuse the drugs, adding without a job he wasn't able to afford them.

The series that inspired Stewart's spree was not named.

Gender pay gap grows

WOMEN working for some of the UK's largest community pharmacy groups are likely to earn close to 20% less than the average male employee, according to a report from British pharmacy publisher *Chemist + Druggist*.

Lloydspharmacy, the second biggest pharmacy brand in Britain, revealed the average male employee earned 26% more than the mean female employee, a 2% increase on the 2017 statistics.

The group attributed the pay imbalance to the low levels of women employed in management roles within the company.

It also reported that efforts were being made to create a more even gender split within the senior ranks of Lloydspharmacy group, including educating managers "so they understand the benefits of a diverse workforce", and removing "unconscious bias by upskilling managers in the recruitment process".

Rowlands, the UK's fourth largest pharmacy group, also saw an

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What type of Australian fruit starting with "Q" does Acne Control Australian Botanicals Hydration Essence contain?