

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news.

AdCheck launch

CONSUMER Healthcare Products (CHP) Australia has launched a new service to ensure protect brands from falling foul of the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), when mandatory pre-approvals of consumer advertising for therapeutic goods come to an end on 30 Jun.

AdCheck has been developed to provide expert compliance checks and guidance on all forms of direct to consumer therapeutic goods advertising, helping to minimise the risks of non-compliance.

CLICK HERE for more information about AdCheck.

COVID-19 intern registration concerns

PHARMACISTS are expressing concerns about the potential impacts COVID-19 could have on the ability of interns affected by the virus to gain registration.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, told the Society's weekly COVID-19 webinar that he had raised the issues around interns who have been forced to self-isolate and were anxious about their ability to sit exams or complete enough hours to gain

registration, with the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

"I have spoken personally with the Chair of the Board around this issue, and we had a meeting today [Wed]," Freeman said.

"We hope to see some positive signals from the Board in and around ensuring interns who have been directly affected by COVID-19 being able to register in the future in a timely manner, so that we don't have workforce issues once the COVID-19 crisis has subsided."

Staffing fax now critical to pharmacy

MONITORING incoming faxes has never been more important following the introduction of bulk-billed telehealth consultations, TerryWhite Chemmart Professional Practice Manager, Chris Campbell, believes.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Queensland Branch President, told a COVID-19 webinar on Wed night, that pharmacies needed to consider dedicating a staff member to process faxed scripts as they arrived, following a surge in their use.

"Some of our pharmacies are doing 80% of their volume just in fax prescriptions," he said.

"If we went to the week prior to the legislation changing and allowing bulk-billed telehealth consults, on average [we were getting] one to three a week, to some of our pharmacies getting 200 to 300 faxes a day.

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"The best pharmacies have assigned someone as their role to receive those [faxed scripts].

"What they do is as soon as they receive a fax they're calling the patient immediately - if the patient's contact details are not on the prescription they're calling the surgery and saying, 'please any faxes that you send to us on any scripts we need the patient's contact details'.

"The reason why this has been so important is, whilst there have been some products like hydroxychloroquine and salbutamol, that we've had a lot of trouble getting in, some of our out of stocks have only been [for] one or two days, but we may not have had it on that specific day, and that person is able to get ahead of it."

Campbell said that while it had been "okay" to leave faxed scripts until a patient arrived in the

pharmacy, "now it's at a volume where you can't afford to do that".

He told delegates listening to the webinar that manning the fax machine would allow pharmacy staff to get in contact with patients when they might still be with the prescriber, which may help sort out issues around the prescribing of products that are expected to be out-of-stock for the long-term.

*Compared to over the counter medicines and equivalent to intranasal corticosteroid sprays. Always read the label. Follow the directions for use. If symptoms persist, talk to your health professional. Research conducted and funded by Rhinocort. Efficacy of Budesonide compared to intranasal corticosteroids and antihistamines in allergic rhinitis. November 2019. Available at Rhinocort.com.au *Registered Trademark. JORH18207M.

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Review full PI before recommending or supplying Resolve Plus 1.0. PI available on request from Ego Pharmaceuticals.

Reference: 1. Resolve Plus Product Information. Date of Most Recent Amendment 26 October 2018.

 the science of healthy skin

Don't waste PPE: PSA

PHARMACY staff using personal protective equipment (PPE) must not treat it as "a fashion accessory", TerryWhite Chemmart Professional Practice Manager, Chris Campbell, says, with other health professionals rationing their supplies.

Speaking on Wed night's Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) COVID-19 webinar, Campbell, said the current guidance on the use of PPE was that "where the contact time is under 15 minutes and there is a low amount of touching, it's not necessary".

"I'm not saying, 'pharmacists don't wear it', but to be cognisant of the current recommendations," he said.

"If you're going to wear it you've got to be spot on with how you do it, because we are being viewed by some healthcare workers who would be working in a hospital, who are having to ration their PPE.

"Yes we need to protect ourselves and take the advice, but if we're wearing it, we can't touch it, we've got to hand sanitise prior to putting it on, [because] if we touch it, we compromise it."

Campbell, told the webinar that he had received a call from a theatre nurse, who was "irate" after visiting one of the group's pharmacies.

"She thought the pharmacy team were wearing the masks as a fashion accessory," he said.

"She said, 'I saw them touching it multiple times, they didn't have it fit properly'.

"She said that in her work they



had to ration them... that she was at risk, her patients were at risk and she knew that people in hospital would die because they [hospital staff] didn't have access to PPE, but she saw it wasted in a pharmacy."

Commenting on the use of PPE for pharmacist immunisers, Campbell noted that despite the inevitable close patient contact, the advice was that it was "still not recommended", as consultations were generally under 15 minutes.

"The best thing you can do in those scenarios is have strong screening tools," he said.

"We'd recommend that anyone who has a booking system [for vaccinations] to reinforce that on the booking form and on the reminder messages to patients, that if they have symptoms to book again at another time."

Campbell added that the advice for the general public was that they did not need to wear PPE unless they were unwell or were suspected of having contracted COVID-19.



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Positive signs for pharmacy telehealth

NEGOTIATIONS are continuing to secure funding to enable pharmacists to provide telehealth services for medication reviews, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia National President, Dr Chris Freeman, believes.

Having been excluded from the Federal Government's initial COVID-19 telehealth scheme, Freeman said progress was being made to ensure pharmacists can provide vital medication management programs via video platforms.

"We have been advocating quite strongly for medicine review services, including MedsChecks, which I think offer a huge opportunity for pharmacists and pharmacies in this in environment, where more



people are self-isolating to have that meaningful conversation with them around their medicine and medication management," he said.

"We're a little frustrated with how slow it's coming along, but were expecting a very positive announcement imminently... in relation to the use of telehealth for medicine review services."

Sanofi seeks halt to insulin stockpiling

PHARMACISTS and clinicians are being asked to encourage patients with diabetes not to stockpile insulin products, by pharmaceutical manufacturer, Sanofi.

In a statement released earlier this week, Sanofi's Head of Medical, General Medicines Business in Australia, Dr Katarina Kelin, stressed that there had been no interruption to the supply of the company's insulin glargine 100 units/mL product, but warned stockpiling could have unintended consequences.

"We support the advice of

the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and other who recommend that people living with insulin-dependent diabetes do not increase the amount of insulin they store at home," she said.

"This could disrupt patterns of distribution and supply and contribute to future shortages for others."

Kelin also noted that Sanofi's Lantus brand was being delisted from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and patients should be offered alternatives such as Optisulin, which is A-flagged for pharmacy substitution.

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Dispensary Corner

AUSTRALIA'S health leadership has been proven once again, with a warning from a local doctor that coronavirus may be able to be spread through farts.

A social media thread by Aussie Dr Andy Tagg cited tests earlier this year which found more than 50% of patients with COVID-19 infection had the virus present in their bowel.

"SARS-CoV-2 can be detected in faeces and has been detected in an asymptomatic individual up to 17 days post-exposure," Tagg said.

However, presence of COVID-19 in any farts would be extremely unlikely if the person was wearing pants, he added, urging further work to rule out transmission via bodily gases.

STRICT anti-coronavirus measures being introduced in Indonesia have apparently included the recruitment of volunteer actors to play the role of "ghosts" aiming to scare people into staying at home.

The initiative is the brainchild of a group in the village of Kepuh in central Java, using spooky so-called "Pocong" or "shroud ghosts" (below).

However the novelty may be having the opposite effect, with some people heading out on the streets to check them out.



Pharmacy's pivotal roles

COMMUNITY pharmacists have a vital role to play in managing patients and minimising transmission during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Chinese expert says.

Speaking during a webinar hosted by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), Peking University Third Hospital Director of Pharmacy, Rongsheug Zhao, urged pharmacists around the world to take proactive measure to protect themselves and their communities.

"Pharmacists have a pivotal role to play, not only in ensuring access to medicines and medical devices, but also in public health," he said.

"Mainly by informing the public about preventative measures, advising about behavioural precautions and the risk assessment, early detection and referral of individuals suspected to be at a high-risk of being infected."

Zhao also stressed the need for pharmacists to play an active part in patient care post-discharge from hospital.

"A retrospective study suggests that 23% of COVID-19 patients have complications based on the characteristics of comorbidities of the affected population," he said.



"Clinical pharmacists play a vital role in medication reconciliation, implementation of medication therapy management for patients with chronic diseases to improve medication compliance, accuracy and cure rates."

During the 90-minute webinar on Wed night, highlighting China's experience of the virus, Zhao also stressed the need for pharmacists to be up to date with the latest developments in terms of progress on vaccines and treatments, noting that of 52 candidate vaccines under development, two have progressed to phase one trials.



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UK cash crisis

BRITISH pharmacies are seeing their margins eroded as wholesale medicine prices rise in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the BBC reports.

The broadcaster noted longer opening hours and increased deliveries had bumped up staffing costs, leaving thousands of stores facing a "cash crunch" and potential closures, reducing access to vital medicines.

Win with Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away a collection of NS products that protect the skin against irritation, valued at RRP \$36



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