

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of pharmacy news, plus a full page from MSC Signs.

PSA postpones branch elections

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has announced its Branch Committee Elections will be postponed for 12 months, due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, said the organisation had sought legal advice to extend the terms of existing committee members until 30 Jun 2021.

Privacy screens

ENSURING patient privacy during consultations is critical.

Find out more about MSC Sign's portable privacy screens on [page three](#).

Flu jab push gets shot in the arm

PUBLIC and private stocks of influenza vaccines are set to be replenished after the Federal Government announced it had secured three million additional doses.

The fresh stock will bring the total of flu vaccine doses available in Australia to a record 16.5 million.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, said the move would "head off a severe shortage of [the] vaccine at the height of the flu season", with pharmacies witnessing an extremely high level of demand for it in recent weeks, fuelled by concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic.

"While flu vaccination does not prevent against COVID-19, vaccination against the flu is critical to protecting the general health of Australians," he said.

"Both influenza and COVID-19 cause serious respiratory illness.

"The combination of both diseases can be life threatening,



especially for our vulnerable people - so a flu vaccination is a very wise precaution in 2020."

Australian-based vaccine manufacturer, Seqirus, has announced it will produce approximately two of the additional three million doses of the vaccine announced by Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, yesterday.

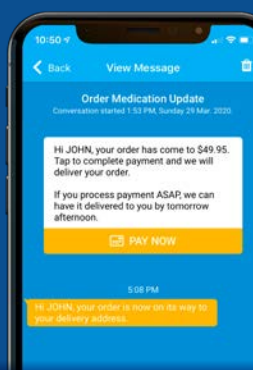
Seqirus Executive Director Commercial Operations, Danielle Dowell, said the company would

distribute the stock to pharmacies and GP clinics for the private market in areas of high demand, as soon as possible.

"It's important to note that the supply of these additional doses won't be instantaneous - our team will be working hard to manufacture doses, but patients should phone their clinic or pharmacy ahead of time to ensure the vaccines have arrived and are available," she said.

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Dispensary Corner

OUTDOOR exercise is still OK in these days of social distancing - but authorities in Venice Beach near Los Angeles are certainly discouraging some sorts of physical activity.

California's "Safer at Home" order means all parks, beaches, bike paths and hiking trails in Los Angeles County are closed until at least 15 May in the hope of containing the spread of coronavirus.

An oceanfront skate park on the Venice Beach Boardwalk has been completely covered in sand to discourage visitation, making the popular spot's ramps and bowls (pictured) unrideable.



A SOUTH Australian supermarket chain is making headlines across the world after denying a refund to a man who had stockpiled \$10,000 worth of toilet paper and sanitiser.

John-Paul Drake from Drakes Supermarkets told the ABC that the customer had reached out wanting his money back after having his eBay account closed. "My eBay site has been shut down, so we couldn't profiteer off that," the man reportedly told Drake, whose pithy response involved the use of his middle finger.

Reports of the incident have now gone viral, with news sites across the globe carrying the anti-hoarding story.

Telepharmacy coming

PHARMACISTS will be able to provide Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement-funded medication reviews to patients over video and teleconferencing platforms from tomorrow (**PD** breaking news).

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, said the decision would boost medicines safety and reduce the risk of pharmacists contracting COVID-19 while conducting reviews.

"Throughout the entire COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacists are adapting and innovating to ensure they continue to provide the best healthcare for their communities," he said.

"Allowing medicine reviews via telehealth whether it be on videoconference or teleconference is a common sense decision.

Freeman said the PSA would continue to engage with the Federal Government and push for a relaxation on rules around the frequency at which patients can receive Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs) and Residential Medication Management Reviews (RMMRs).

"Currently pharmacists can provide just one HMR per patient every 24 months with similar restrictions imposed on RMMR and MedsCheck programs and I am calling on the Government to allow pharmacists to be able to perform additional follow-ups as clinically necessary," he said.

"In a time where so much attention is given to managing the immediate COVID-19 pandemic, we must also not lose sight on the importance of chronic disease management and the safe and quality use of medicines"

Economists back COVID restrictions

CALLS for the relaxation of social distancing and other COVID-19-related restrictions to boost the economy should be ignored, a group of economists believe.

In an open letter to Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, more than 150 economists said the view that there is a trade-off between the public health and economic aspects of the crisis, is false.

"We cannot have a functioning economy unless we first comprehensively address the public health crisis," they said.

"The measures put in place in Australia, at the border and within the states and territories, have reduced the number of new infections.

"This has put Australia in an enviable position compared to other countries, and we must not squander that success.

"We recognise that the measures taken to date have come at a cost to economic activity and jobs, but believe these are far outweighed by the lives saved and the avoided economic damage due to an unmitigated contagion.

"We believe that strong fiscal measures are a much better way to offset these economic costs than prematurely loosening restrictions.

"A second-wave outbreak would be extremely damaging to the economy, in addition to involving tragic and unnecessary loss of life."

Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is

Gerard Stevens,
Managing Director,
Webstercare.



Supply is the tip of pharmacy's iceberg

I want to celebrate the crucial nature and breadth of the role pharmacists play in health care. We are much more than the end of the medication supply chain.

Despite the corona crisis dominating everyone's lives, other health issues continue unabated.

Asthma and diabetes still need ongoing management. Cardiovascular diseases require ongoing support and treatment. Chronic and acute pain remain a major challenge for many people. Mothers and babies need support and reassurance. And smokers need our help to quit right now.

While doctors and nurses marshal to fight COVID-19, it will be the forgotten third leg of primary health – pharmacists – who Australians will largely turn to for ongoing treatment, advice and reassurance.

Sure, supply issues abound. Violence has even erupted as fear sweeps people desperate to retain access to their crucial medication.

But behind every story of customer aggression, there are countless others of kindness and appreciation. We know our communities trust and rely on us.

When the corona crisis abates, let's marshal our own resources and assert the reality our communities experience every day: medication supply is only the tip of the pharmacy iceberg.



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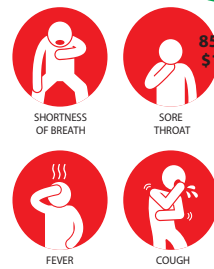


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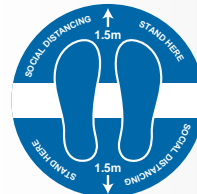
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