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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of the latest news, a special update from **Australia Post**, plus a full page from **Designer Brands**.

Aus Post delivers

AUSTRALIA'S postal workers are supporting pharmacists to get critical medicines to patients during the COVID-19 crisis, with Australia Post's Home Delivery Service (**PD 30 Mar**).

Funded through the Federal Government's \$25 million program to support medicines delivery services, Australia Post is offering pharmacies the ability to get medicines to patients who are self-isolating during the COVID-19 pandemic, without needing to having a staff member on the road, or having to pass on costs to their customers.

Create a MyPost Business account to register. See **page two** for more.

Designer sani

RESPONDING to the COVID-19 induced surge in demand for hand sanitiser, Designer Brands is offering pharmacies a new low-price range.

Designer Brands is set to support the rollout of its Instant Hand Sanitiser products with a large-scale digital advertising campaign to bolster sales.

The hand sanitiser is available in 500ml and 60ml bottles.

See Designer Brands' full page ad on **page four**.

Board to announce plans for interns

CONCERNS over the ability of pharmacy interns to meet their registration criteria as a result of the COVID-19 are set to be the focus of the Pharmacy Board of Australia's monthly meeting this week.

In a statement published on the Board's website, Chair, Brett Simmonds, said this week's meeting would look at options to vary the supervised practice requirements to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on interns, while continuing to support them in achieving the relevant learning outcomes.

"This includes how many supervised practice hours you will need to complete to be eligible for general registration during 2020, and any alternatives to the other requirements outlined in the Board's Registration standard: Supervised practice arrangements," he said.

"We will advise you by 30 Apr of the Board's decisions, to give you



the assurances you need."

Simmonds added that the Board would also address arrangements for oral and written registration examinations scheduled to take place during the year.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, flagged concerns during the Society's COVID-19 webinar last week (**PD 17 Apr**), noting interns affected by the virus

were anxious about their ability to sit exams and complete sufficient hours to gain registration.

"We hope to see some positive signals from the Board in and around ensuring interns who have been directly affect 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," he said.

New RUM bins

NEW Return of Unwanted and Expired Medicines (RUM) bins will be rolled out to community pharmacies across the country over the coming month, RUM Project organisers have announced.

The new bins have been designed to increase security, with a one-way entry, to ensure medicines placed in the bins will not be able to be removed.

When pharmacies receive a new RUM bin, they will need to remove the red lid from the bin, attach the secure one-way entry lid, and use the bin as they normally would.

HMR/RMMR follow-ups approved

NEW Home Medicine Review (HMR) and Residential Medication Management Review (RMMR) rules announced today will allow accredited pharmacists to conduct two follow-up consultations for the first time.

The move, welcomed by Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, aims to reduce medicine-related harm, with the additional reviews to be conducted within nine months of the initial HMR or RMMR.

"The PSA has long advocated for a system that allows for medicine reviews to be conducted frequently that is dependent on

patient's needs, with meaningful follow-up and I commend the Government for making this necessary change," he said.

"As medicines experts it is essential that pharmacists are able to properly review patient's medications as well as provide advice to other members of the health care team to ensure the safe and quality use of medicines for the elderly," he said.

"At 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."



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Following the Australian Government's allocation of \$25 million to support home medicines in the wake of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Australia Post is also able to offer a free delivery service to support vulnerable Australians by providing them with free delivery of PBS and RPBS prescription medicines.

The free service will be available to vulnerable Australians, which include those who are isolating themselves at home on the advice of a medical practitioner, confirmed COVID-19 cases, people aged over 70, parents with new babies, people who are pregnant, and people with chronic health conditions^.

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Dispensary Corner

LIKE any indulgence, eating pastries can be good for your mental health - if not your waistline.

That probably explains a move in the German border town of Lauterbach, where locals are missing the ability to easily head into France for some croissants and baguettes.

However the enterprising citizens aren't letting social distancing get in their way, with an innovative initiative which still lets them get their calorie and carb-filled fixes.

The bakery in the neighbouring French village of Carling now allows phone orders from across the border, with owner Myriam Jansen-Boualit then taking the goodies down to a barricade separating the countries.

Her German customers are then making their pick-ups at an appropriate distance using fishing tackle (pictured).

The new angle on food delivery goes to show that once you taste French pastries you can quickly get hooked.



Geography limits access

SMALL rural pharmacy owners are calling on the Federal Government and suppliers to stop debating what constitutes a medicines shortage and focus on patients in need.

The Small Pharmacies Group reported a significant number of pharmacies across the country have experienced difficulties access Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listed products, with numerous "out of stocks and items on back order".

A spokesperson for the group said there was little public acknowledgement of "the chaos that is happening on the ground", as a result of COVID-19-induced shortages.

"Community pharmacists are after all the people who actually deliver the PBS to consumers," the spokesperson said.

"We have a pretty good idea of what constitutes a 'shortage'.

"The fact is that small and rural

pharmacies are still feeling the ripple effects of bulk buying by large pharmacy players back in early Mar and no longer have any confidence that anyone really has a handle on the stock situation let alone that it is being managed in an equitable manner.

"What the decision makers are completely missing is that the problem is not about whether there is theoretical or imminent stock in the system or whether out-of-stocks are temporary.

"The problem is that equity of access to essential PBS medicines has gone out the window.

"The fact that the PBS has had a massive fail on maintaining its single policy objective - to ensure that all Australians have equitable access to essential medicines, regardless of ability to pay or geography - is being completely overlooked while bureaucrats and suppliers try to parse the meaning of medicine shortage."

SA pharmacists vaccinating update

PHARMACIST indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) has moved to clarify the regulatory landscape regarding pharmacists vaccinating in a location other than a pharmacy in South Australia.

In an update to members, PDL stressed the Master Policy and Pharmacy Business Pack, will only respond when pharmacists are operating within the approved scope of pharmacy practice and relevant state legislation.

"As the South Australian legislation is silent on where an immunisation service is conducted, PDL have been liaising with SA Health in

an endeavour to clarify the situation," the update said.

"We are pleased to now be able to advise that the Immunisation Section, Communicable Disease Control Branch, Department for Health and Wellbeing of SA Health have confirmed that there is no legislative impediment to an approved pharmacist vaccinating in a location other than a pharmacy, provided of course the pharmacist is linked to an accredited service provider (Approved Pharmacy) and complying with the Vaccine Administration Code."

CLICK HERE for PDL's vaccination practice alert.

Pharmacy Balint group launch

FORMER pharmacist turned consultant psychiatrist, Helen Schultz, is launching a Balint group of pharmacists facing the challenges of COVID-19.

The group will meet tomorrow night with the aim of providing a safe reflective space, to just stop and consider how this whole pandemic is affecting them on a personal and professional basis.

CLICK HERE to register.



Guild Update

Guild advice on JobKeeper

MANY Guild members have raised questions about the Australian Government JobKeeper payment scheme which is designed to assist businesses and their employees during this COVID-19 crisis.

Employers are advised to register with the ATO to be kept informed about how to claim, eligibility and payments, because interpretations of the eligibility requirements and rules are changing regularly. In addition, the Guild continues to advocate with government to maximise the eligibility of our Members. If pharmacy owners have not done so yet, please register with the ATO.

The Guild will provide more information about assessing eligibility and how to claim as details become available.

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