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Today's issue of PD

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

Students step up

COVID-19 is providing University of Queensland pharmacy students the opportunity to step up and support the profession, *The New Daily* reports.

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Director of Pharmacy, Associate Professor Ian Coombes, said the crisis had allowed students take on a greater role during their clinical placements and support the pharmacy workforce.

"We have moved away from the traditional student agreement and employed the students as casual operational staff... once they have been trained," he said.

Pharmacy never more important: FIP

PHARMACISTS around the world have a critical role in protecting the public from "inappropriate advice" and "fake news" around medicines, International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) CEO, Catherine Duggan, believes.

Speaking during a FIP COVID-19 webinar on Fri night, Duggan said the pandemic had heightened the focus on patient safety in the pharmacy sector.

"Patient safety's never [been] more important than now," she said.

"If we think about where we are in our different countries, in our different localities, as we face this global pandemic, patient safety risks are becoming more heightened than ever.

"We see this through medication errors linked to additional workforce pressures, we see this through the interactions that patients may be suffering with their existing therapies.

"We see this in the potential for drug reactions and adversity to



remedies and treatments including the inappropriate advice, or the inappropriate prescribing of different therapies, of 'fake news'."

Duggan added national pharmacy organisations need to ensure their governments "know about pharmacy".

"They need to have evidence about pharmacy and they need to hear about the impact we can play," she said.

"There's never been a time

when nimble and appropriate regulation to ensure patient safety is needed more, but also supportive regulation whereby individuals can practice at the top of their licence and really deliver in a flexible way for patients and the public.

"We have seen emerging and responsive changes to pharmacy regulations, which are enabling patients to receive greater access from the essential workforce the pharmacy profession provides."

Meds shortages and supply a concern

SUPPLY chain and medicines shortages are the top issues affecting pharmacies around the world, an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) poll reveals.

The survey conducted during a COVID-19 webinar last week, found 58% of respondents were being impacted by supply issues.

Close to half (48%) of those polled reported they were being



affected by "emerging and responsive changes to pharmacy regulations", while 42% said they had been impacted by "medication errors linked to additional workforce pressures".



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Dispensary Corner

STRICT COVID-19 lockdowns in Bavaria, Germany are reportedly being flouted by several underground hair salons which have been secretly styling despite regulations banning any hairdressers being open.

Officers in Elsenfeld and Momlingen have opened investigations for non-compliance in two cases where "people were having their hair done" in the cellars of two homes which had reportedly been professionally equipped.

Hair salons are considered to be non-essential in the region, but will begin to reopen early next month as coronavirus restrictions begin to ease.

NOT every business is suffering due to the coronavirus downturn, with a farm near Charlotte, New Carolina in the USA having come up with an innovative option to liven up tedious video conference calls.

The Peace N Peas farm is renting out a miniature donkey named Mambo to join in Zoom chats, with customers able to reserve a 10 minute online session for US\$50.

Other farm animals are also on offer, including chickens, ducks and three horses.

However Mambo is the key attraction, with a specially created website touting his participation as "like a pesky little brother that doesn't let anyone relax too long".

The site also suggests you should "invite this Ass to your next meeting" - book it in now at www.dangrooster.com.

Pharmacist reprimanded

A NSW-based pharmacist has been reprimanded by the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) and has had a number of conditions imposed on his registration after admitting to stealing from the pharmacy he worked at in up until Jan 2018.

The pharmacist also failed to report he had been charged in relation to the offence, to the Pharmacy Board of Australia within a seven-day period, as mandated by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

The HCCC heard the pharmacist was observed taking diabetes medication, Januvia on 10 Jan 2018, and was subsequently dismissed.

The pharmacist, who had worked in the store since 2010, initially as a pharmacy assistant, before gaining registration in 2015, admitted to taking in excess of \$2,000-worth of stock, over a 30-day period leading up to his termination.

HCCC papers noted the circumstances surrounding the pharmacist's offending included the pharmacist being informed the store was under-performing

across a series of criteria, including spending more than five minutes dispensing prescriptions and encouraging customers to purchase "add-ons", which placed him under considerable pressure.

The pharmacist said he felt unable to raise concerns with his manager or the owner, who was becoming "increasingly anxious about the pharmacy's poor financial performance".

Following the termination of his employment, the pharmacist reported feeling depression and was referred to a psychologist, who told the HCCC he may have been clinically depressed at the time of the offences.

The psychologist added that the pharmacist posed "no real and material threat of re-offending" in the future.

The HCCC reprimanded the pharmacist and ordered him to seek treatment from a psychologist, who will be required to inform the Board of failure or termination of treatment, while the pharmacists must also undergo mentoring by an experienced pharmacist.

Pharmacy warns of COVID rent crisis

IRISH pharmacy group, Hickey's Pharmacy, is calling for rental reform to support businesses through the COVID-19 crisis.

The family-owned group has written to leading politicians warning of a "tsunami of job losses" and the potential failure of businesses as a result of landlords' rental demands, the *Irish Independent* reported.

In a letter to US-based property group, Hines, which own's the property where Hickey's flagship Dublin store is located, the

group's owner, Paddy Hickey, said the store would be able to pay just 10% of the monthly rent of \$72,000.

Hickey said restrictions imposed to protect against the pandemic has meant the store had "nearly zero footfall".

However, a representative of the landlord said "while we understand the unprecedented circumstances that currently prevail, we are not in a position to consent to any variations to existing lease terms".

Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is

Gerard Stevens,
Managing Director,
Webstercare.



Tech Silver linings

We're all seeking silver linings at the moment. Australians have been forced to change their daily behaviours like never before... and succeeding!

It reminds us of humanity's adaptability under duress. It encourages us that positive behavioural changes are possible.

Top of my list is a sector-wide uptake of technology-driven solutions – both existing and emerging – to reduce risks and improve efficiencies across the health system. Pockets of best practice are apparent, but this needs to evolve and become usual practice.

The corona crisis reminds us of the absolute need to reduce unnecessary risk. And as we emerge, organisations will feel more pressure than ever to make do with less. These goals are usually at odds. But technology embraces both.

Aged care facilities are a case in point. Current best practice already minimises the need for doctors and registered nurses to be physically present. We can already access and analyse big data in real-time to inform clinical & management decision-making at the point of care.

The mainstay of RACFs – care workers – are burdened by enormous responsibility and limited training. Technology offers a multiplier effect on their effectiveness and efficiency. Embracing it is not only smart, but also humane. Now that's a silver lining!



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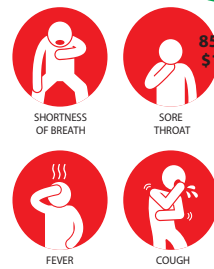


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