



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Asthma boost

COMBINATION asthma medication is over-prescribed in Australia, but dispensing patterns are showing signs of improvement, research from the University of NSW reveals.

Researchers found more than 31,000 children and adolescents had a fixed dose combination medication dispensed without having previously had an inhaled corticosteroid, between 2013 and 2018.

However, dispensing rates declined from 15 per 1,000 children in 2013 to seven in 1,000 in 2018.

Vic supply chain concerns eased

CONCERNS over the sustainability of the pharmaceutical supply chain under Victoria's Stage Four restrictions have been eased, with the supply of scheduled medicines to be exempt from regulations requiring wholesalers to cut their workforce by 33%.

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily* this morning, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, welcomed the State Government's decision to issue the exemption, following lengthy discussions with key stakeholders yesterday.

Tassone said the initial restrictions would have severely impacted Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers, with their capacity reduced by a third, which he said would have meant pharmacies would receive proportionately less



stock, and medication adherence would be slashed.

"The CSO-accredited wholesalers are rightfully very worried about what this measure, if [it was] introduced without amendment, would mean for their ability to meet Commonwealth CSO standards, the expectations of their community and hospital pharmacy clients – and the patients they serve," he said.

"We saw what occurred with

the panic buying in Mar, we know the huge impacts it had on the supply chain – yet here we are contemplating something that we know can only end in poor health outcomes.

"It's not just community pharmacies that would be impacted but hospitals – the very institutions treating patients suffering from the deadly virus we are trying to fight against."

TGA puts heat on unlawful imports

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued fines totalling more than \$25,000 to two Melbourne-based businesses over alleged unlawful importation and advertising of infrared thermometers.

The Australia Beauty Group received a \$12,600 penalty for allegedly importing thermometers that were not included in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) and were neither exempt nor excluded from the operation of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.



VeraTemp PTY received a \$12,600 fine for allegedly claiming its thermometers had been approved by the TGA, when no such approval had been given.

NAPSA backs digital learning for CPD

THE National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) has issued a position paper calling for the utilisation of digital technologies to allow accessibility of continued professional development (CPD) for all.

"Online CPD resources allow any student across Australia to access the same educational opportunities as any other student," NAPSA said.

"Many education opportunities are designed as face-to-face workshops or require attendance



in major cities, this makes it difficult for students living rurally.

"With the recent COVID-19 pandemic...CPD has had to adapt rapidly to online learning.

"NAPSA supports the continued use of digital technology as a means of equitable access to online learning."

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Dispensary Corner

PHARMACY staff have a lot on their plate at the moment in promoting the safe use of medications and continuity of supply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a focus on hygiene and trying to minimise patient numbers attending hospitals discussing the safe use of hand sanitiser probably seems unnecessary.

But based on reports from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) every sale of sani may need to come with the advice "not to drink it".

The CDC reported that a review of call records to poison centres had found a number of patients have been admitted to hospital in Arizona and New Mexico after consuming hand sanitiser, however, no explanation was provided for their decision to take a tippie of the bacteria killing liquid.

"This investigation highlights the serious adverse health events, including death, that can occur after ingesting alcohol-based hand sanitiser products containing methanol," the researchers said.

"Safety messaging to avoid ingestion of any alcohol-based hand sanitizer product should continue," they wrote.

"Young children might unintentionally swallow these products, whereas adolescents or adults with history of alcohol use disorder might intentionally swallow these products as an alcohol (ethanol) substitute."

Disability care needs meds reviews

AUSTRALIA needs to develop clear pathways to ensure patients with cognitive disabilities can access funded medication review services, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes.

In its submission to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the PSA said there was a "complete lack of data and clear understanding of medicine use in disability care", which needs to be addressed to drive improvements in medicines safety.

PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman, expressed concerns that the trend of inappropriate use of psychotropic medicines seen in aged care may also be prevalent amongst the disability sector.

"It would be a travesty if standards of care around medication management in the disability care sector were also found to be wanting," he said.

"Inappropriately sedating people with disabilities is not care, it's an abrogation of responsibility.

"There is a critical lack of information on medicines use by people with disability and at the moment pharmacists are in handcuffs when it comes to providing essential medication management support and services to people with disability.

"Without appropriate data it is not possible to help optimise pharmacological interventions for people with disability, nor improve their quality of life.

"Medicine-related data collection with appropriate privacy and data security arrangements is critical to enable co-design and development of robust policies for the disability care sector and to implement best practice medication management for people with disability."

The PSA called on the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to develop a mechanism to provide funding for pharmacists to deliver quality use of medicines (QUM) services to support disability service providers.

The submission called for the



development of medication management frameworks and models of care to be introduced that "clearly integrate the role of pharmacists and facilitate mechanisms for disability service providers to work with pharmacists to implement best practice medication management for people with disability".

The PSA added that barriers restricting where pharmacist immunisers can administer vaccines in some States and Territories should be removed.

Mask challenge

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has launched "World Mask Week" starting today, as it moves to encourage people around the globe to practice social distancing, good hand hygiene and the wearing of face coverings to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Members of the public are being urged to share photos of themselves wearing masks on social media with the hashtag, #WearAMask, and challenge their friends to do likewise.

Win with John Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and John Plunkett's are giving away a SuperLift Collagen Eye Lift worth RRP\$39.95

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Q: In which Country is John Plunkett's Super Cosmeceuticals made?

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