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No double standard on COVID testing

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has rejected suggestions that its opposition to Queensland proposed pharmacy-based COVID-19 testing trial is inconsistent with its support of a similar pilot in South Australia.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch Director, Gerard Benedet, described the PSA's criticism of the Queensland trial as a "slap in the face of pharmacists" in the state.

Benedet noted PSA SA Branch President, Robyn Johns, had described the decision to allow pharmacy-based testing as "forward thinking common-sense", while PSA Queensland Branch President, Shane MacDonald, and National President, Dr Chris Freeman, had both expressed concerns about the Queensland trial.

"This double standard is shocking and all about getting a media splash instead of being

consistent and putting the health of Queenslanders first," Benedet said.

"So it's good and sensible to conduct the testing in South Australia but not in Queensland?"

However, Freeman told *Pharmacy Daily* that SA Health had engaged with the PSA on the pilot to ensure it was implemented as safely as possible for pharmacists, pharmacy staff and the community.

"To ensure the South Australian pilot captured incidental customers only, the pilot was not overtly promoted and was limited to a very small number of carefully selected, unidentified sites, which is in stark contrast to that of the Queensland Government," he said.

"The very public promotion of the trial was reckless and sent a very dangerous message that could lead to people potentially with COVID-19 wandering into a pharmacy to get tested.

"Our ongoing concern is that people at risk will present to pharmacies preferentially before designated COVID-19 testing centres and PSA members have already reported telephone calls from patients to Queensland pharmacies asking for a test.

"We have continually asked



members of the community not to enter a pharmacy if they are unwell and displaying COVID-19 symptoms and this advice stands.

"Since the Queensland trial was announced, we have had an overwhelming amount of feedback from pharmacists, fearful for their own safety and that of their staff."

New jellybean

PHARMACY is set to get a Gluco boost, with the launch of Nova Pharmaceuticals' new jellybean brand.

See **page four** for more.



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Mental health support network

PHARMACISTS and other health workers at the coalface of Australia's COVID-19 crisis are being given access to a new mental health support service.

The Essential Network app, launched by the Black Dog Institute, connects health professionals with specialists who can provide individualised mental health advice and triaged support to ensure access to the help they need when they need it.

The service is free and can be accessed anonymously.

The Black Dog Institute noted that international research had shown that many health workers in areas most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic develop mental health symptoms.

Following the SARS pandemic the Institute said between 10% and 20% of health workers reported "significant traumatic stress symptoms" up to two years after the pandemic finished.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

Swift AP move

AP GROUP has announced the appointment of Chris Swift as its National Business Development Manager.

Swift will join the pharmacy brokerage firm from 01 Sep, bringing a wealth of experience in the industry, after being part of the Sigma Retail and TerryWhite Management's executive and leadership teams.

Swift played a key role in integrating the TerryWhite, Chemmart and ChemPlus brands into the Sigma group, and helped develop and implement new retail formats.

AP Group Managing Director, Rob Whelan, said Swift's appointment would support the business's continued growth.

e-Script hurdles still to be jumped

BEING 'e-script ready' will require more than activating software updates, a Pharmacy Guild of Australia National Councillor warns.

Following the announcement that the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) had issued the green light for the rollout of electronic prescribing across the Greater Melbourne area (**PD 17 Aug**), Guild Councillor, Paul Jones, said pharmacy owners needed to be aware of what needs to be in place to dispense e-scripts.

"As a community pharmacist working on a daily basis, e-scripts are one of the most exciting developments to come out of the National Digital Health Strategy and the encouraging signs coming through the Community of Interest testing hubs are showing that the benefits can be realised for prescribers, patients and pharmacies," he said.

"However, there are still a number of hurdles I see that we all will have to jump over in both the running of a community pharmacy, and in the daily practice as a pharmacist, to be able to deliver and realise the benefits of e-scripts.

"Being 'e-script ready', particularly for community pharmacy, means a lot more than simply activating your new software.

"There are a number of elements that need to be in place to not only be ready for e-scripts but to ensure your pharmacy's 'digital health' as well.

"These elements can be divided into two areas of readiness – digital



and practice."

Jones said pharmacy owners need to ensure staff pharmacists have Healthcare Provider Identifier-Individual registrations, while their pharmacies must have Healthcare Provider Identifier - Organisation numbers, to access the Healthcare Identifier Service.

He also suggested pharmacies should consider having a dedicated pharmacy mobile number that can be linked to dispensing software to enable patients to send e-script tokens to the pharmacy, and to ensure scanners can read QR codes.

Jones added pharmacies needed to consider how e-scripts will impact their workflow, and how they will manage processing paper and electronic scripts.

He urged pharmacy owners to review their IT hardware, provide staff training to ensure pharmacy assistants are aware of workflow changes, and have contingency plans for emergency situations

where they many experience internet outages.

"Ultimately, if you fall at the first couple of hurdles, you are going to have to pick yourself up, and continue the race to e-scripts," he said.



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Dispensary Corner

HAVING enough sunscreen to ensure no vital bits got burned used to be the most pressing concern facing Berlin's nudists.

Oh how times have changed, with a boar named Elsa snatching a swimmer's bag, while foraging for food.

The unfortunate bather was caught "sprinting" - or at least attempting to chase - after the boar in a desperate effort to retrieve his clothes and laptop.

Bather and life coach, Adele Landauer, documented the incident on social media, describing the gent (pictured below) as a "real hero".

In true life coach fashion Landauer found a nugget of inspiration from the encounter noting the man "was very focused" and managed to secure his belongings.

"Everyone of us adored him, how focused he stayed and when he came back with his yellow bag in hand we all clapped and congratulated him for his success," she said.

"This happens when you're focused on your goals."



Three min thesis winner

UNIVERSITY of Queensland Pharmacy PhD student, Trinh Hua, has claimed the People's Choice Award in the 2020 Virtual UQ three-minute thesis (3MT) Competition.

In her three-minute video, Hua outlined her PhD research into cancer treatments, comparing cancer cells that survive radiotherapy or chemotherapy to zombies.

"These cancer cells that can come back to life... can also replicate much faster [than normal cancer cells]," she said.

"Therefore one cancer zombie can rapidly grow into an army.

"These cancer zombies are also better at spreading all over the body, similar to how zombies are very good at spreading all over the world during an apocalypse."

Hua noted that unlike the un-dead, cancer zombies look like any other cancer cell, making it difficult to identify cells that can bounce back to life after treatment.

However, she noted that during



her research she had developed a solution to detecting the un-dead cells, using red and green dyes in combination with robotic screening tools, enabling her to distinguish a single zombie cancer from thousands of cells.

"This is a tool which drug companies can now use to find these cancer zombies in order to design drugs that can target this new breed of cancer," she said.

"Because as shown by many apocalyptic movies, 'to defeat your enemy, you must know your enemy'."

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Q: How many years have Jacaru been making hats?

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Guild Update

6CPA Mental Health Pharmacy Trial

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Griffith University and the University of Sydney have announced that the Bridging the Gap between Physical and Mental Illness in Community Pharmacy (PharMIbridge) trial will commence next month.

This study focuses on individualised medicine support, adherence and mental and physical wellbeing for people living with severe and persistent mental illness. This project is an important initiative to broaden the role of pharmacists in helping people living with mental illness.

Pharmacists serve as a critical element in the healthcare team, working with patients to manage their conditions, often as a conduit to other services, an advocate for the person, or to lend a compassionate ear.

The trial will be conducted in four study regions: Hunter New England and Northern Sydney regions in NSW, Gippsland region in Victoria, and ACT.

Participating community pharmacies will be remunerated to support training attendance and to deliver either the PharMIbridge (intervention) or study funded MedsCheck (comparator) service.

If you would like further information, please email pharmibridge@griffith.edu.au or visit griffith.edu.au/pharmibridge.

This project is part of the Pharmacy Trial Program funded under the 6CPA.

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