

Fri 31st January 2020

## AMA engages fear and scare tactics

**POLITICIANS** in Queensland are being urged not to fall for the Australian Medical Association's (AMA's) "unfounded fear and scare tactics" designed to encourage them to withdraw their support for a pharmacist prescribing trial in the State.

In a letter to state MPs the AMA Queensland Branch President, Dr Dilip Dhupelia, warned "the health, safety and quality of care of Queenslanders will be compromised on the basis of the convenience of the pharmacy prescribing trial".

Dhupelia urged the MPs to push for preparations for the trial to be stopped and for a similar physiotherapist prescribing trial to be ended immediately.

Responding to the AMA letter, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch President, Trent Twomey, said the AMA's

opposition to the trial, which would allow pharmacists to prescribe oral contraceptives and antibiotics for urinary tract infections, was baseless.

"It's disappointing that the doctors union would seek to use unfounded fear and scare tactics to further their own interests ahead of the advancement of women's health," Twomey said.

Highlighting the success of pharmacist prescribing in other countries, Twomey accused the AMA of attempting to deprive Queenslanders of the care enjoyed by people around the world.

"Australia is falling behind other OECD countries in terms of accessibility to primary health services," he said.

"This trial follows the model of other countries, such as the UK and Canada where community pharmacists are able to provide

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Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today has two pages of news.

### The Pharmacist

**NETFLIX** is set to shine a light on the early days of the US's opioid epidemic, in a new docuseries, *The Pharmacists*.

The true crime series focuses on pharmacist, Dan Schneider's quest for justice following the 1999 murder of his son in New Orleans while buying illicit drugs, to Schneider identifying the inner-workings of the US's opioid epidemic.

Schneider identified an increase in Oxycontin prescriptions and concluded patients were using the opioid for recreational purposes with doctors profiting from their patients' addictions.



prescriptions for a number of common ailments.

"The Palaszczuk Labor Government should be congratulated for embracing world's best primary health care practice.

"This trial forms part of their innovative health care agenda which is clearly patient focussed and Pharmacists are keen to play an increasing role as trusted primary health care professionals.

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### Pharmacy best for mask distribution

COMMUNITY pharmacies could offer a "more efficient and effective" distribution network than Primary Health Networks (PHNs) for face masks in response to the threat of coronavirus, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

Earlier this week the Federal Government announced plans to distribute one million masks from the National Medical Stockpile to GPs through their PHN.

However, Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, noted a Melbourne-based PHN had written to pharmacists indicating it would arrange for the delivery of "a small number [of masks] to each General Practice in the catchment" once supplies were received.

"The Guild is in regular contact with the Chief Medical Officer regarding the coronavirus situation," he said.

"We continue to advocate that any distribution of masks would be far more efficient and effective if done via Community



Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers and community pharmacies were also a recipient to give to patients where required on referral for further assessment.

"The community pharmacy and wholesaler network have a past history of success in being involved with flu pandemic responses."

Tassone added that the Guild has been liaising with domestic suppliers to refer members should they wish to purchase their own stock of N95 masks.

He added that there was no evidence of patients obtaining masks to send overseas.



## Dispensary Corner

**SOCIAL** media can be a really positive tool for sharing information, and cute cat videos.

However, the rise of "influencers" peddling all sorts of things has the potential to cause problems.

Responding to a growing trend of patients coming into their stores requesting specific medicines, because influencers recommended them, a group of Spanish pharmacists have launched a campaign saying "no influencer is an expert in medication - YOUR PHARMACIST IS".

Pharmacist, Guillermo Martin Melgar, told France 24, he starting calling out influencers and bloggers who have been recommending specific products in Sep 2019.

"I started seeing fashion influencers reference medication in their Instagram stories," he said.

"They we're recommending medication without any knowledge of what it actually contains."

"People are coming into pharmacies and asking for medication that they saw influencers take."

Oh for the days of Dr Google!



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## Pharmacists prove value

AUSTRALIA'S bushfire crisis has highlighted the broadening role pharmacists are playing in supporting patients, however the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes the profession needs to be empowered to do more.

Writing in *The Mercury*, Guild Tasmanian Branch President, John Dowling, said the bushfires had shown the need for pharmacists to be allowed to provide greater access to asthma medications.

"Australia urgently needs to be brought into line with the UK and Canada, so people aren't forced to wait for a GP appointment just for a prescription for their asthma preventer," he said.

"Making asthma medication so difficult to access that it leads to such high rates of misuse doesn't make sense, especially when someone living with asthma has



previously been prescribed the preventer by their doctor.

In light of the bushfire crisis, a lot needs to change.

"Access to asthma medication is just one.

"Pharmacists have the training to do more; after the bushfire crisis it has become clear pharmacists need to be playing a bigger role to help meet the health needs of their communities."



## Events Calendar

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily*'s events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**01 - 02 Feb:** SHPA Extension Seminar in Surgery and Perioperative Medicine, Brisbane; Early Bird until 10 Jan: [www.shpa.org.au/ext-surg-periop-2020](http://www.shpa.org.au/ext-surg-periop-2020)

**08 Feb:** SHPA Masterclass in Clinical Medication Management, Adelaide; Early Bird until 17 Jan: [www.shpa.org.au/ext-surg-periop-2020](http://www.shpa.org.au/ext-surg-periop-2020)

**06 - 08 Mar:** NSW/ACT Annual Therapeutic Update 2020; Crowne Plaza Terrigal; Save the date - registrations open 2 Dec: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

**19 - 22 Mar:** APP 2020; Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre; Early bird registrations now open: [www.appconference.com](http://www.appconference.com)

**06 May:** APC & ANMAC Interprofessional Colloquium 2020; QT Hotel, Canberra; for more info visit: [www.ipccolloquium.com/](http://www.ipccolloquium.com/)



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