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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news.

### Mask up - RACGP

VICTORIAN GPs are being urged to be judicious in providing letters outlining why patients may be exempt from State Government rules mandating the use of face coverings.

Responding to a surge in requests for exemptions Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Victoria Chair, Dr Cameron Loy, said GPs can only provide letters outlining their assessment of why a particular patient cannot wear a face mask.

"GPs should use these letters wisely, as with all medical certificates. It is for the greater public health good that all those who can wear a face covering, do," he said.

"In these difficult times when we are seeing community transmission in many places, we all need to do our bit."

He added masks help reduce community transmission.

## PharMIbridge on track

THE Bridging the Gap between Physical and Mental Illness in Community Pharmacy (PharMIbridge) trial is set to begin in the coming months, the project's stakeholders announced yesterday.

The study led by University of Sydney Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, Dr Claire O'Reilly, and Griffith University Professor of Mental Health, Amanda Wheeler, will focus on individualised medicine support, adherence, and mental and physical wellbeing for people living with severe and persistent mental illnesses.

The randomised controlled trial will see community pharmacies in the Hunter and New England, Northern Sydney, Gippsland and the ACT remunerated to support training attendance and to deliver either the PharMIbridge or study-funded MedsCheck services.

With the trial set to commence, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, said pharmacists have played an increasingly important role in the area of mental health.

"As the most accessible of all health professionals, community pharmacists are often the first people mental health patients turn



to for help and advice," he said.

"Many pharmacists have undergone additional training to help them identify patients who may be living with mental illness.

"Pharmacists also are critical in helping patients adhere to their medicine regimens to ensure they get best possible outcomes from the medicines they have been prescribed.

"This project is an exciting and important initiative to broaden the role of pharmacists in helping patients with mental illness."

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) National President, Dr Chris Freeman, also welcomed the imminent rollout of the program.

"Medicines are an important component of treatment for people living with mental illness which is why pharmacists, as medicines experts, have a critical role to play, however that should not limit our role," he said.

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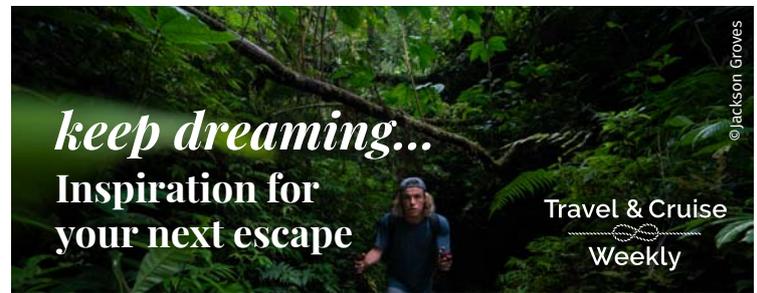
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## Dispensary Corner

**HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE** may be the COVID-19 “blocker” of choice for US President, Donald Trump, but the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy is less supportive of use of the anti-malarial.

From today pharmacies in Ohio will be prohibited from dispensing or selling hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19.

State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy Director of Policy and Communications, Cameron McNamee, said the decision had been made in the interests of patient safety.

“We’re looking at the best science to determine what’s best for the patients of Ohio,” he said.

“The long and short of it is, we want people to focus on what works, such as social distancing and mask use.

“We ultimately want to make sure people are being safe and not exposing themselves to drugs that have shown not to be effective in treating COVID-19.”

Not necessarily a man of science, Trump has noted that he’s still here having taken a two-week course of the drug.

“I don’t think you lose anything by doing it,” he said.

“It doesn’t seem to be too popular - you know why?”

“Because I recommended it.”

And in a move that seems to continue the US Federal Government’s support for the controversial drug, camera brand Kodak has received US\$765 million to pivot into producing ingredients to manufacture generic medications.

## WA dispenses e-script

**PHARMACY** Guild of Australia 2020 Excellence in Professional Innovation Award winner, Wizard Pharmacy Kalgoorlie Central, has dispensed Western Australia’s first electronic prescription.

Software provider, Fred IT Group, announced the State’s first e-script token was issued by Plaza Medical Centre yesterday.

Pharmacy owner, Elise Wheadon (pictured), welcomed the accelerated rollout of e-scripts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The developments of the past six months have highlighted how much pharmacy, working along with other health professionals, can do to provide greater flexibility and health safeguards for patients, particularly for vulnerable patients,” she said.

“We were delighted to work with Plaza Medical Centre on achieving the first electronic prescription and progressing digital health here in Western Australia.”

The script was issued using Best Practice’s medical software, eRx Script Exchange, Fred NXT Dispense and MedView Flow.

Fred IT Group CEO, Paul



Naismith, said he was proud of the company’s role in supporting the introduction of e-scripts.

“The introduction of electronic prescriptions in Western Australia is a terrific example of collaboration and leadership spanning pharmacy, health and software vendors,” he said.

“A fully digital network will deliver significant benefits for pharmacy and pharmacy patients, and it is extremely gratifying to see Western Australia ready to go with national electronic prescribing.

“I am proud of Fred’s role - along with our partners - in providing leadership and dedication to achieve this important change.”



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## Guild elections

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia is set to announce dates for its State and Territory Branch and National elections, pending approval from the Australian Electoral Commission.

Guild Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood, urged female members to run, saying “as an organisation we need you to come on board”.

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