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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **Sigma Connect**.

## PBS update

**PHARMACISTS** are being urged to advise patients who have been prescribed tramadol 50mg capsules of changes to opioid listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

The changes will also affect the way outstanding scripts can now be claimed as of 01 Jun.

**CLICK HERE** for more information.

## Sigma protection

**WITH** the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE), pharmacy wholesaler, Sigma Healthcare, is stocking disposable aprons, surgical grade goggles, masks and gloves.

See **page four** for more.

## Amazon seeks trademark for OTC range

**ONLINE** retail giant, Amazon, is applying to trademark 'basic+care', for a range of self-care products.

A filing was published on the IP Australia website on 29 May, and follows an application to trademark 'Amazon Pharmacy' in Australia earlier this year (*PD* 15 Jan), which has been opposed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

The 'basic+care' trademark

# SHPA welcomes PBS opioid changes

**MEASURES** restricting the prescribing of opioids through smaller pack sizes will reduce medication-related harm, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) believes.

Welcoming the introduction of revised Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings to include halved pack sizes for opioid products including oxycodone, tramadol and morphine, with no increased quantities or repeats for patients requiring short-term relief from acute pain, SHPA CEO, Kristen Michaels, said the move would prevent unnecessary harm caused by opioids initiated in hospital settings.

"On behalf of SHPA members and their hospital colleagues who care for Australia's most acutely unwell, we welcome these changes, which correlate to recommendations made in our 2018 report, which was informed by data from 135 metropolitan, regional and rural Australian hospitals," she said.

"The Federal Government is to be commended for its support for smaller pack sizes for opioids, better labelling, warnings and consumer information for opioid medicines, and additional restrictions on the



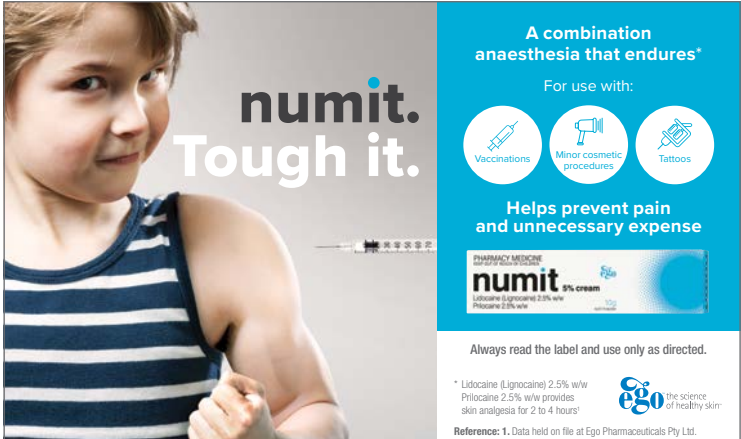
use and prescribing of opioids for longer term use, all of which help reduce the prescribing and dispensing of opioids in quantities that are in excess of patient need.

"Hospital pharmacists are passionate about protecting the health and recovery of patients as they receive care in hospital, and our members should be proud of these patient-centred improvements they have helped initiate.

"Importantly, we remain committed to further reform, as our data showed less than 5% of hospitals have formal opioid stewardship programs, which are

showing good progress in reducing unnecessary opioid supply, and even fewer have invested in other innovative responses to address this ongoing problem.

"In the immediate term, this year we are pleased to roll out education on appropriate use of opioids and pain management alternatives – alongside the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia in partnership with the Therapeutics Goods Administration – and we will continue to build and strengthen relationships that support optimal pharmacist and prescribing practices, in the interests of community safety."



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Reference: 1. Data held on file at Ego Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd.

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## Uni Syd seeks alumni aid

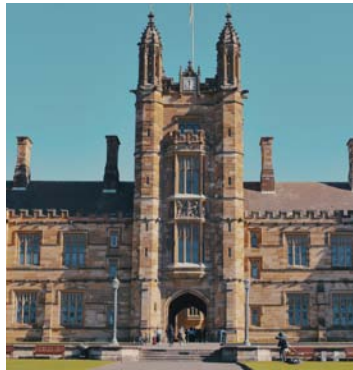
**LECTURERS** from the University of Sydney's School of Pharmacy are considering reaching out to overseas-based alumni for support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing the need for students to demonstrate practical skills during their training, during an International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) webinar last week, University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine and Health, Pharmacy Practice, Associate Professor Rebekah Moles, said the school was looking at a number of options for assessing students who have been stranded overseas during the global health crisis.

"At Sydney Uni, we've been looking at particular competencies and things we would really love to be doing face-to-face, but at certain times it hasn't been possible," she said.

"It's particularly for our students who are still overseas and can't come to the university.

"It might be about device



technique, counselling on medicines, dispensing skills, or compounding.

"You might need to do some things in a pharmacy setting if they can go to a pharmacy and ask a preceptor to assess these skills.

"We've been thinking about asking our alumni - we've alumni all around the world working in pharmacies - so we're thinking of trying to find preceptors for these students that are overseas in order to complete these skills."

## ADHA, DoH working on e-authority Rx

**WITH** the rollout of electronic prescriptions underway across a series of communities of interest (COI) the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) is working with Services Australia and the Federal Department of Health (DoH) to provide an electronic solution of authority scripts.

Responding to a question during a Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) webinar last Wed, about what medications will be eligible to be dispensed using e-scripts, ADHA Medicines Safety Program Director, Andrew Matthews, said the majority of medications, including Schedule 8 and S4D products, were within the scope of the project.

"The only thing that we had a little bit of trouble with was those specific written authority scripts, where an authority prescription needs to be sent off for additional paperwork and approval processes," he said.

"Various organisations like



Services Australia and the DoH are working to streamline and electronically enable those sorts of additional authorities, but all of the scripts that you would normally process are in scope for electronic prescriptions."

Matthews added that pharmacists should review the requirements for e-scripts in their state or territory, noting information is available online with different rules governing jurisdiction.

# Are you concerned about the uncertainty of stock supply?

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## Dispensary Corner

**A BOOTMAKER** in Romania has come up with a unique way of enforcing social distancing - he's creating a new range of size 75 shoes.

Grigor Lup, a cobbler from the city of Cluj in Transylvania, became concerned that people were not respecting the rules when COVID-19 restrictions began to ease last month.

Lup's new range of exceptionally long footwear (pictured) aims to remind people to keep their distance.

"I went to the market to buy seedlings for my garden...there weren't many people there, but they kept getting closer and closer," he told *Reuters*.

"If two people wearing these shoes were facing each other there would be almost 1.5 metres between them," he said.

Although he sells a full range of ready-made shoes, the shoemaker specialises in custom made footwear produced especially for theatre performers across the country.

Business has ground to a halt due to the coronavirus shutdowns, but he's already received five orders for the special new range which costs about \$150 a pair.



## PA recognition needed

**PHARMACY** assistants' ongoing dedication to supporting the profession and their communities needs to be recognised now more than ever, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, believes.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the annual Pharmacy Assistants' National Conference called off, Tambassis revealed the 2020 Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (PATY) Award will go ahead in a virtual format.

"PATY is the premier award for approximately 35,000 pharmacy assistants nationally," he said.

"It provides a public platform to recognise the high value pharmacy assistants contribute to their pharmacies, the community and the industry.

"The coronavirus pandemic won't stop us from acknowledging and celebrating the great work that pharmacy assistants do for the community on a daily basis.

"This year we had to be a little more innovative and bring the award fully online.

"Nominees will be able to submit a video as part of the nomination



process, which will be run through the Pharmacy Guild Queensland Branch's new Cloud Assess LMS platform.

"2020 selection criteria has been amended so nominees can include examples of their frontline leadership and skills developed during the coronavirus pandemic."

"State Workshops and the National Judging Workshop will be conducted via Zoom, with successful nominees enjoying catering via an online meal delivery service."

**CLICK HERE** to nominate a pharmacy assistant.

**Pictured**, 2019 PATY winner, Brianne Lowe, From HealthSAVE Pharmacy, Charlestown, NSW.

## Arrow launches Esberitox Compact

**ARROW** Pharmaceuticals is expanding its range of echinacea, thuja and baptisia-based cold remedies.

The manufacturer reports Esberitox Compact contains five-times the concentration of its Esberitox Lemon product, reducing consumers' daily intake of tablets.

The lemon-flavoured tablets can be chewed or swallowed, with Arrow stating the



supplements are suitable for patients aged 12 years and old.

**CLICK HERE** for more.

## PSA career focus

**THE** PSA will host a webinar this evening explore different career opportunities for pharmacists.

**CLICK HERE** to register.

## Guild Update

### PBS opioid change

Pharmacists are reminded that from this week, the PBS listings for opioid medicines has changed.

Opioid medicines are now available in smaller quantities with no repeats for the treatment of non-chronic pain. Patients who require long-term treatment of chronic pain with opioids will still be able to access larger pack sizes and prescribers will be able to prescribe repeats where they meet the new restrictions requirements.

From 01 Jun 2020, some opioid listings will become Authority Required (STREAMLINED). Pharmacists will be required to ensure any relevant dispensed scripts have a valid streamlined authority code, which needs to be valid at the date of prescribing. Pharmacists will also need to check that prescribers have correctly requested increased quantities or repeats for chronic pain through telephone/electronic authority for up to one month's treatment or electronic/written authority for up to three months treatment.

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961151	9311171000012	NO GLOVES™ VINYL SML 10PK
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