

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from TerryWhite Chemmart.

Declining supply

PHARMACISTS are being urged to implement strategies to manage patient expectations to avoid complaints about declining to supply medicines.

Pharmacy indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) issued a practice alert yesterday flagging the rising number of complaints being made against pharmacists for declining requests for certain over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

The alert advised pharmacists to provide clear and consistent messaging about medicines supply to patients, and recommended that they thoroughly document the advice provided and reasons for declining supply to assist their defence against any potential complaint.

AIR overwhelmed by vax numbers

DISCREPANCIES in the numbers of vaccines administered by pharmacists and official records highlighted by a National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) report, are believed to be linked to a backlog being experienced by Services Australia.

The NCIRS *Review of pharmacist vaccination reporting to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)* reported that there was significant under-reporting of vaccines administered by pharmacists (PD 16 Jun).

However, an email sent to vaccine recording platform provider, GuildLink, from Services Australia revealed delays in processing the vaccines to the AIR.

"Due to an overwhelming amount of AIR transmissions being received with the COVID-19 issue, there has been a delay in processing these requests and they are yet to show on the patients' records," the email reported.

"All efforts are being made to reduce the backlog of claims and this should be resolved in the short term."



Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch Director, Gerard Benedet, told *Pharmacy Daily* it was important to "make sure everyone understands that it wasn't a MedAdvisor or GuildLink problem".

"Both of those platforms are doing the right thing," he said.

"We look forward to the Immunisation Register sorting out its backlog and giving people a more accurate picture of the recording of vaccinations across all immunisers, whether that's nurse, doctor or pharmacist.

"I would think the NCIRS was disappointed that the AIR data

that they may have been given wasn't totally up to date.

"Unfortunately, its report relied on data that potentially wasn't accurate."

Earlier this week Guild Tasmanian Branch Director, Monique MacKrill, rejected suggestions in the NCIRS report that pharmacists were "dragging the chain" on recording vaccines to the AIR (PD 22 Jun).

"In most states and territories, it is compulsory for pharmacies to record immunisations to AIR.

"The problem has been at the receiving end – the AIR failing to register submitted data from pharmacy software," she said.



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AMA accused of being 'anti-patient'

CALLS from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) for doctors to unite against the rollout of the Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot - Queensland (UTIPP-Q), are being branded "anti-patient" by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Responding to claims that the trial of pharmacist prescribing would lead to overprescribing and see Queenslanders treated to "a bargain basement version of health care", Guild National Vice President, Trent Twomey, accused the AMA Queensland President, Dr Chris Perry, of putting GPs' incomes ahead of patient care.

"The old scare campaigns voiced by some doctors are anti-patient and do reputational damage to their own profession," Twomey said.

"It's disappointing that some doctors still maintain an 'us' versus 'them' mentality based on their hip-pocket.

"Patients should be the centre of our health system, but unfortunately some doctors believe they are the centre of the health system.

"The ongoing attack on fellow primary healthcare professionals, health and allied health

practitioners is frankly ridiculous.

"Queensland should be at the forefront of the best primary healthcare practices. The UTIPP-Q is yet another example of safe and effective innovation in the primary healthcare model.

"We make no apology for putting patient-centred primary healthcare first," Twomey said.

"Although the pilot is new for Queensland, other OECD countries, including New Zealand and the United Kingdom, have had pharmacists prescribing treatment for UTIs for many years.

"Over the next two years we'll see the pilot's successful results do the talking."

However, Perry, accused the State Government of implementing a "new style of patient care under the guise of choice and convenience, but it's simply a bargain basement version of health care", with non-medical health professionals taking on roles previously the sole domain of doctors.

"Queensland is the only state or territory in the country to allow a trial where pharmacists can diagnose urinary tract infections



instead of GPs, and sell antibiotics over the counter without conducting any tests to be sure there is an infection, and at a time when the country is facing a serious problem of antibiotic resistance because of over-prescribing," he said.

"We have a health system which favours a midwife-led childbirth model over the use of obstetricians, because the State Government will not pay for rural and regional women to have the same access to labour, delivery and post-natal services as their city-living sisters.

"Doctors are extremely concerned about the direction of our health care system and we are providing them with an opportunity to voice their concerns,"

"Enough is enough. We believe there are serious risks in providing this kind of inferior patient care."

Battling fake vax news critical

PHARMACISTS have a key role in boosting immunisation uptake & dispelling "myths and fake news related to vaccines", International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) President, Dominique Jordan, believes.

In the FIP's new *Give it a shot - Expanding immunisation coverage through pharmacists* paper, Jordan welcomed the expansion of the profession's scope of practice to enable pharmacists to administer vaccines but noted barriers and opposition to it persists.

Alongside moves to provide vaccination services, Jordan said pharmacists have "another tremendous challenge we need to address together... to build trust in vaccines and provide evidence-based advice to the public and dispel myths and fake news related to vaccines."

"Improving vaccination coverage is a global imperative and pharmacists, together with our colleagues in other health professions, must join efforts to ensure no-one is left behind in vaccination strategies," he said.

PSA Excellence Awards noms open

PHARMACISTS have until 16 Jul to get their nominations in for the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Symbion Excellence Awards and the MIMS Intern Pharmacist of the Year Award.

The prestigious awards recognise outstanding pharmacists, PSA National President, Dr Chris Freeman said.

"2020 has been an extraordinary year, one where pharmacists have gone above and beyond to serve the community, PSA wants to acknowledge you and to highlight the very best our profession had achieved this year," he said.

"The Excellence and Intern Pharmacist of the Year awards focus on pharmacists who have

exemplified a contribution to the profession and have maintained the highest standards of commitment and professionalism".

"There have been countless examples of pharmacists who continue to go above and beyond in this terrific profession and it is great to be able to recognise some of them in this way."

The MIMS Intern Pharmacist of the Year will receive a prize of \$5,000 with all three Symbion Excellence Award winners to receive \$9,000 to spend on PSA conferences, courses, membership or subscriptions.

Winners will be announced on World Pharmacist Day, 25 Sep.

CLICK HERE to nominate a candidate today.

Qld e-script legislation on its way

LEGISLATORS in Queensland are being urged to follow their interstate peers and implement legislation to pave the way for the use of electronic prescriptions.

Queensland is the last State or Territory to address the issue, with the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) currently introducing paperless prescriptions on a phased basis through Communities of Interest (CoI) across the country.

Newly elected Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Queensland Branch President, Shane MacDonald, told *Pharmacy Daily* he hoped the issues would be resolved soon.

"PSA is working collaboratively with Queensland Health and ADHA to bring this to life, we have

been voicing our concerns over the past few months and know we have been heard," he said.

"What we are seeing are the best endeavours to get this to happen as quickly as possible, amidst a large workload for the Department.

"Thankfully the staged implementation of Communities of Interest has taken the pressure off slightly and has bought Queensland pharmacists some time."

MacDonald expressed concern that further delays in enacting legislation could see patients, pharmacists and prescribers along the state's borders adversely impacted, if it is not implemented before COVID-19 enforced restrictions are lifted.

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Dispensary Corner

THERE are clearly no exceptions to strict COVID-19 regulations in Bulgaria, where the country's Prime Minister is facing a \$200 fine for not wearing a face mask during church.

PM Boko Borissov flouted the order which was announced by the Bulgarian Health Ministry earlier this week in response to a surge in coronavirus cases.

The stricture applies to all indoor venues across the country, including the Rila Monastery south of Sofia which was subsequently visited by Borissov and his entourage.

Authorities confirmed that "all persons who were without protective face masks in the church at Rila Monastery during the Prime Minister's visit will be fined," including the PM himself as well as officials, journalists and photographers who accompanied him.

THE lack of crowds at sports fixtures have definitely helped control the spread of COVID-19, but plans to enhance the stadium atmosphere using cardboard cutouts have not all gone smoothly.

British soccer club Leeds United has been forced to issued a formal apology after the face of al-Qaeda terrorist leader Osama Bin Laden (below) appeared during a match.



Qld boosts pill access

WOMEN across Queensland will have improved access to oral contraceptives regardless of brand, under revised legislation announced yesterday.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Queensland Branch President, Shane MacDonald, said the amended legislation would enable pharmacists to dispense oral contraceptives not listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) to patients without a valid prescription, in line with rules for PBS-listed products.

"Enabling the supply of all brands of oral contraceptives to women, under similar circumstances to those stipulated in the PBS Continued Dispensing Determination is a common sense approach by the Queensland Government, he said.

"It is important that women in Queensland are able to access the brand of oral contraceptive they require when there is an immediate need for the supply to allow for continued treatment."

The legislative reforms also allow medical practitioners to prescribe schedule 8 and schedule 4 medicinal cannabis without the requirement to have prior approval from Queensland Health.



MacDonald said the move would streamline the prescribing process for medicinal cannabis, by removing duplication in the approval process.

"Decreasing the administrative burden and improving access to medicinal cannabis is an important step to ensure patients continue to access cannabis products legally," he said.

"Any process that removes red tape and allows pharmacists and prescribers to focus on clinical care and medication safety, ultimately leads to better outcomes for patients and more efficient use of resource.

"Approval from Queensland Health is still required when prescribing an S8 medicinal cannabis product for a drug dependent person and the usual approval process for prescribing controlled drugs applies."



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Tardy tech axed

A PHARMACY technician with a habit of being late for work has seen his unfair dismissal claim shot down by a US court.

The unnamed tech who arrived at the pharmacy late 122-times in an eight-month period claimed his tardiness was related to attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

The employer made several efforts to support the tech, who failed to comply.

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