

Pharmacy vital for Govts

GOVERNMENTS around the world are being urged to rethink their use of the community pharmacy sector within their health systems as part of future strategies to tackle pandemics.

A paper released by the World Pharmacy Council (WPC) titled *Pandemic preparedness - optimising use of the pharmacy network* noted that "early learnings" from the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the need for guidance on how best to use pharmacies "as a vital part of the support network".

"As the COVID-19 pandemic has progressed, there has been widespread but belated recognition of the vital role in the delivery of health care services that pharmacies play," the WPC said.

"Many health systems have hastily adopted measures to allow pharmacies to extend their contribution to coping with the demand on health services, but lack of advance preparation has led to delays in implementing measures that can provide an important contribution to managing the crisis and the prevention of new COVID-19 cases.

"There is a need for a greater focus by states on reducing preventable hospital presentations by allowing pharmacists to adopt their full scope of practice.

"Take this opportunity to rethink and reshape healthcare systems,



namely through the integration of community pharmacy in the planning and delivery of health services, using their services to the full, and expanding their role and responsibilities, based on the learnings of the pandemic."

The paper noted that while many primary care providers switched to telehealth, community pharmacies around the world remained open to patients "for immediate advice without the need for appointments".

The WPC, which is led by Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, George Tambassis, also called on governments to engage community pharmacies early in crisis situations to manage demand for medicines and other health products, while also empowering pharmacists to offer therapeutic substitution in the event of medications shortages.

The organisation also flagged concerns that a number of countries did not include community pharmacies when distributing personal protective equipment in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news, plus a full page from **POS Works**.

Mag-Sup

High absorption magnesium

Australian made. Pharmacy only.

50's PBS & RPBS Listed

Available in 50's, 100's and 250's from Symbion, Sigma and API.

Use only as directed. Consult your healthcare professional if symptoms persist.

Priceline focused on franchisees

API-OWNED pharmacy banner group Priceline Pharmacy says it is focused on supporting its franchisees through the COVID-19 crisis, rather than a potential class action lawsuit (**PD** yesterday).

In responding to the prospectus issued by law firm, Levitt Robinson, a spokesperson for the pharmacy group told **Pharmacy Daily** that "at the current time there is no class action against Priceline".

"Apparently, it can only proceed if enough franchisees agree to a funding agreement," the spokesperson said.

"We believe the lead applicant in the proposed action is a former Priceline franchisee who is no longer with the brand.

"Priceline remains focused on supporting our franchisees, doing our utmost to keep them, their staff and customers safe during this COVID-19 crisis and protecting the brand and

business we have built together.

"We have no further comment to make on this matter."

Levitt Robinson alleges that franchise agreements between pharmacy owners and Priceline Pharmacy may contain provisions which "may breach the current legislative framework which governs pharmacies in NSW, Queensland and Victoria.

However, a spokesperson for the Pharmacy Council of NSW, which regulates pharmacy ownership, told **Pharmacy Daily** it reviews franchise agreements for compliance with schedule 5F of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) and in particular the provisions related to financial interests, in relation to stores in the state.

"The Council will not approve an application supported by a franchise agreement which contravenes schedule 5F of the Law," the spokesperson said.

Feel in your element



Ferrogen Iron + Vitamin C is the **NEW** therapeutic iron supplement for the prevention and treatment of medically diagnosed iron deficiency.

LAUNCH OFFER NOW AVAILABLE



www.ferrogen.com.au

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL. FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS FOR USE. IF SYMPTOMS PERSIST, TALK TO YOUR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL.

Ferrogen

Are your customers having difficulty sleeping?

Recommend the clinically researched* Redormin™ Forte difference!

To discover the latest pharmacy specials on Redormin™ Forte, contact your Flordis™ representative - www.flordis.com.au/health-professionals/

This medicine may not be right for you. Read the label before purchase. Follow the directions for use. If symptoms persist, talk to your health professional.

*Fussell A, et al., Eur J Med Res. 2000;5:385-390. Koetter U, et al., Phytother Res. 2007;21:847-851. Lataster MJ, et al., Notabene Medici. 1996;4:182-185. Notter D, et al. Eur J Med Res.2003;3:9-13



COVID 'a chance to be our best': SHPA

AMID the disruption and uncertainty pharmacists are dealing with, the COVID-19 pandemic is providing the profession with an "opportunity to be the best we can", Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) National President, Peter Fowler, believes.

Writing in the *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research*, Fowler described the crisis as "a once in a professional life-time challenge", noting "our pharmacy departments have had teams broken up and separated... our roles and tasks have changed... some are assisting to establish a ventilator capacity in hospitals that have never managed this level of acuity before".

"Against this backdrop, the SHPA has swung into action, with a near-total operational pivot toward ensuring our hospitals, and our hospital pharmacists, are resourced in every way conceivable for the months ahead," he said.

As part of its response Fowler



said the Society had opened up its special COVID-19 webinar series to non-members to ensure the free flow of vital information in the interest of patient care, with the sessions thus far attracting delegates from around the world.

Fowler also noted the launch of the SHPA's COVID-19 Hospital Pharmacy Relief Register, to support understaffed hospitals during the crisis.

"Of course, this is only the beginning," he said.

"Just as we are in for the long haul living under new transmission mitigation measures, and as the pressure on hospital staffing, medicines supply and resources will be high for a considerable time to come, SHPA is steadfast in its commitment to our members, their colleagues and the Australians in their care.

"It is my great honour to lead an organisation that has embraced the challenges posed by this pandemic," Fowler said.

MHR module

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has launched a new CPD-accredited learning module to help pharmacists better understand their obligations when accessing My Health Record (MHR) info.

Three topics are covered:

1. Why a Security and Access Policy is required;
2. The contents of the standard industry policy template, with relevant definitions and terminology; and
3. The obligations to review, update and communicate changes to the policy.

The training resource, which will be open for use by all pharmacists and pharmacy assistants, will be available online at guided.guild.org.au.

It's accredited for one hour of Group 1 CPD, which can be converted to 2 CPD credits upon successful completion of relevant assessment activities.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL CURRENT AND FORMER PRICELINE FRANCHISEES

The imminent class action against Priceline is not aimed at devaluing or damaging the Priceline brand or your investment in it.

The action's objective is to add value to the investment made by franchisees and obtain a fairer franchise agreement, as well as compensation for any infringing conduct, including loss of profits.

It is important that you do not give up what may be valuable claims without obtaining independent legal advice.

Please note: the legal claims, the subject of the class action, are quite complex and require an understanding of the regulatory framework under which pharmacies operate.

Priceline's conditional offer of \$1000 for 'independent' legal advice, arranged by Priceline management, appears inadequate for this purpose.

If you would like a better understanding of the alleged claims against Priceline, we strongly suggest that you, or your lawyer, can seek clarification from Levitt Robinson and make a well-informed decision.



www.classpr.com.au
contact@classpr.com.au
(02) 8267 9499



Dispensary Corner

THE global COVID-19 lockdown may be having a positive impact on the world's cardiovascular health, according to a British physician.

Dr John Wright from the Bradford Royal Infirmary says "one of the intriguing observations during the pandemic has been the marked reduction in patients coming to hospital with acute heart attacks or strokes," he said.

Initially hospitals were concerned that people were suffering symptoms at home rather than risking getting infected in hospital, and while that may be true for milder medical issues, acute cardiovascular incidents would definitely require treatment and be picked up by health services.

Theories suggest the change may be due to the slowing down of normally frantic lives, or the nurturing of more healthy habits including taking more regular exercise in an attempt to get out of the house.

In a blog post for the *BBC* Wright also surmised that with more regular at-home routines, people may be simply remembering to take medications for conditions such as hypercholesterolaemia.

He also cited amalgamated data from Fitbit health trackers which indicated a reduction in average resting heart rates, more active daily minutes and increased sleep duration.

"It seems as though the lockdown has had the health-promoting effect of a good holiday," Wright said.

COVID fuels notification increase

HEIGHTENED consumer concerns fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic may be a factor in driving an increase in the number of notifications to regulatory bodies, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) Professional Officer, Gary West, believes.

Speaking during a Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) COVID-19 webinar, West said PDL had received a "huge increase in volume" of calls and reports in recent weeks, alongside a "proportionately higher than normal number of notifications".

"Some of that could possibly be expected, unfortunately we're all human and pharmacists do make mistakes and some of these can lead to complaints and notifications," West said.

"However, the phenomenal volumes that pharmacists have dealt with in the last six to eight weeks hasn't seen a huge spike in pure



dispensing errors, and we're really pleased to report that generally.

"Where we're frustrated and a little disappointed [is] to see a significant number of complaints and actions against pharmacists for things that are clearly not a risk to the public.

"There are issues relating to dissatisfaction, to demand that weren't being satisfied, unreasonable expectations -

particularly given the supply issues - and also the volumes."

West urged pharmacists confronted by these situations to step back and think about what underlying drivers are influencing a patient's behaviour, to minimise confrontation.

He added that pharmacists should document incidents to ensure a record is available should a complaint be made.

RB thanks pharmacy with PSS donation

RECOGNISING the unstinting efforts of pharmacists and pharmacy assistants through the COVID-19 crisis, RB Health is saying "thank you" to the profession with a \$10,000 donation to the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS).

RB has also distributed almost 4,000 "thank you" packs to Pharmacy Guild of Australia member stores across the country this week.

"When it comes to the health of Australia, pharmacy teams are the first point of contact, sharing advice, providing care and reassuring all of us," RB Health ANZ Regional Director, Glenn Cochran, said.

"As Australian pharmacies



support Australia, we want to support them and so this donation to PSS alongside our thank you packs are a small way for RB Health to acknowledge the wonderful, continued work Australian pharmacy teams have continued to provide during this challenging time."

COVID costs pharmacy threat

IRISH pharmacies are feeling the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a cash-flow crisis affecting businesses' ability to access vital medicines from suppliers.

A survey from the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) found one-in-four had reached their credit limit with pharmaceutical wholesalers, while a significant number had been forced to restructure loans and expand overdraft facilities, in the face of rising costs and plummeting front-of-shop sales.

IPU Secretary General, Darragh O'Loughlin warned the nation's pharmacies were becoming "unsustainable".

PHARMACY OF THE YEAR:



CHISHOLM

"We love Posworks and the data and reports that we can generate have certainly helped with our business management and success."

REBECCA YOUNG, OWNER
CAPITAL CHEMIST CHISHOLM

EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL INNOVATION:



KALGOORLIE CENTRAL

EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:



CHISHOLM

POS Works would like to congratulate Capital Chemist Chisholm in becoming 2020 Pharmacy of the Year and winning the Excellence in Business Management award for 2020.

POS Works would also like to congratulate Wizard Pharmacy Kalgoorlie Central for winning the Excellence in Professional Innovation award for 2020.

**Thank you for choosing POS Works
to be your software partner!**

