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Today's issue of PD

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

RACGP flags telehealth fears

PATIENTS are being urged to consult with their regular GP rather than seek advice from 'pop-up' telehealth providers.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) President, Dr Harry Nespolon, has expressed concerns that new telehealth-only businesses are "potentially providing sub-standard and inappropriate care", with quick patient turnover.

Nespolon warned the businesses were "taking advantage of understandable anxieties in the community about contracting COVID-19 and expanding".

Regional regs hinder substitution

ALMOST a week after the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) issued its first Serious Shortage Medicine Substitution Notice (SSMSN), pharmacists in Victoria and South Australia remain unable to provide alternative medications for patients.

Speaking during a Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) COVID-19 webinar last night, the Society's National President, Dr Chris Freeman, reiterated concerns that the system that has been introduced is overly complicated and slow to respond to shortages.

"The initiative is meant to help patients to continue to access their medicines without delay during times of medicines shortages," he said.

"Unfortunately, the way that it has been set up means that it's going to be very difficult to achieve its objective.

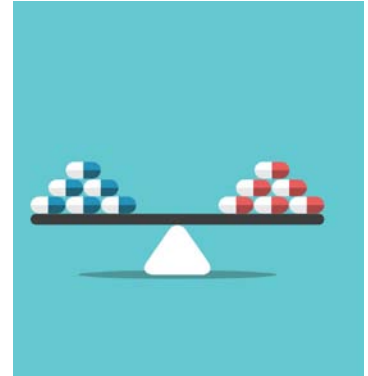
"The laws that govern medicines supply in each state and territory are different, and whether you're

allowed to make the substitution will depend on which state or territory you're practicing in, and each territory may have implemented this slightly differently.

"So you're allowed to make the substitution [of metformin modified release 500 mg for either immediate-release metformin 500 mg or metformin modified-release 1,000 mg, depending on the prescribed dose (PD 15 May)], unless you're currently practicing in Victoria or South Australia, as neither state had issued the public health order required to enable substitution to occur."

Freeman the PSA and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia were continuing to work together to ensure state and territory authorities implement the necessary measures to facilitate substitution when required.

However, he noted "the current model is far too complicated, it's too slow to respond to shortages...



it's inflexible and it doesn't take into account local shortages of supply".

"It's too bureaucratic in the sense that it's not allowing pharmacists to operate within our competency scope, which is really straightforward substitution of strengths and doses," he said.

Freeman added that the PSA's first priority was to ensure the current SSMSN model does not "create additional work for pharmacists on the ground".

Guild gets 'token' Rx confidence boost

INITIAL concerns around fast-tracking the introduction of electronic prescriptions expressed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PD 01 May), have been eased, the organisation's Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood, reports.

Writing in the Guild's *Forefront* newsletter, Greenwood told members that following talks with the Department

of Health and the Australian Digital Health Agency, "the Guild is now confident that the approach being taken towards the introduction of electronic prescriptions will involve appropriate testing and preparedness in relation to both the so-called 'token' model, and also the Active Script List model", to ensure a feasible, safe and efficient rollout of the system.

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*Schrader et al. Human Psychopharmacology, 1998; 13:163-169. Woelk et al. BMJ, 2000; 321:536-539. Schrader et al. Int Clin Psychopharma, 2000; 15:61-68. Brattström et al. J Phymed, 2009; 16:277-283.



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Dispensary Corner

A BEREFT Chinese woman has sent her ex-boyfriend one tonne of onions, with the hope of making him cry as much as she did over her heartbreak due to the relationship ending.

According to a social media post, the shattered woman spent three days at home sobbing, and later found out her ex was not upset at all.

"I've cried for three days, now it's your turn," she said in a note accompanying the sacks of red onions which were delivered to the young man.

He spoke to local media, saying he had broken up with her because of her "over the top behaviour".

WEARING a face mask for COVID-19 protection pretty much precludes you from eating at the same time, right?

Not so, thanks to an ingenious Israeli invention (pictured) which has seen the creation of a mask with a remote-controlled opening so you can get food in.

Tel Aviv-based Avtipus demonstrated the concept this week, requiring users to eat one-handed while the other hand operates a lever.

The company has already submitted a patent application for the concept, with the intention the mask will be available in the coming months.



Time to consider options

PHARMACY owners are being urged to look beyond the COVID-19 crisis, assess where their businesses struggled, and consider whether they should "cash-in the chips" and sell their stores.

Providing a market update on Facebook yesterday, Medici Capital Managing Director, Frank Sirianni, stressed owners need to prepare for business after the pandemic.

"[Owners need] to start looking beyond the current management of the pandemic and all the issues that relate to it in community pharmacy," he said.

"Start thinking about what sort of business you really want to have, and I think the whole episode of COVID-19 has really forced a lot of people to really think about lifestyle, work habits and other aspects of their lives - pharmacy must do the same and be cognisant that this is happening in the community.

"The second issue is to build a better business - start to look at what failed in the current system,



whether it's supply chain, teams, not having the right configuration, or you didn't have the risk mitigation plans in place.


"Give some thought to those sorts of issues and build a wish-list of what you want to address post-COVID-19.

"Overarching all that is, you're going to need to give some serious thought about whether or not you're going to want to stay in business - whether or not now is the time to cash-in the chips, because it's still a solid market."

Bates to bolster FIP professional data

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has appointed University College London School of Pharmacy Head of Educational Development, Professor Ian Bates, to lead its Global Pharmaceutical Observatory (GPO).

The FIP-GPO monitors trends in the global pharmaceutical workforce to better understand the supply of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy support workers, and to correlate trends with population growth demographics and disease burden.



As Director of the FIP-GPO, Bates will direct work to improve, refine, expand and grow the intelligence through partnerships for the benefit of FIP member organisations and partners, with the overall aim of supporting transformation of practice to meet the increasing healthcare demands being experienced across all countries.

Tobacco free day

COMMUNITY pharmacists can play a key role in supporting patients to quit tobacco smoking through nicotine replacement therapy or specialised programs, ahead of World No Tobacco Day on 31 May.

Smoking is associated with more than 15,000 deaths a year in Australia, while second-hand smoke exposure kills more than a million people globally.



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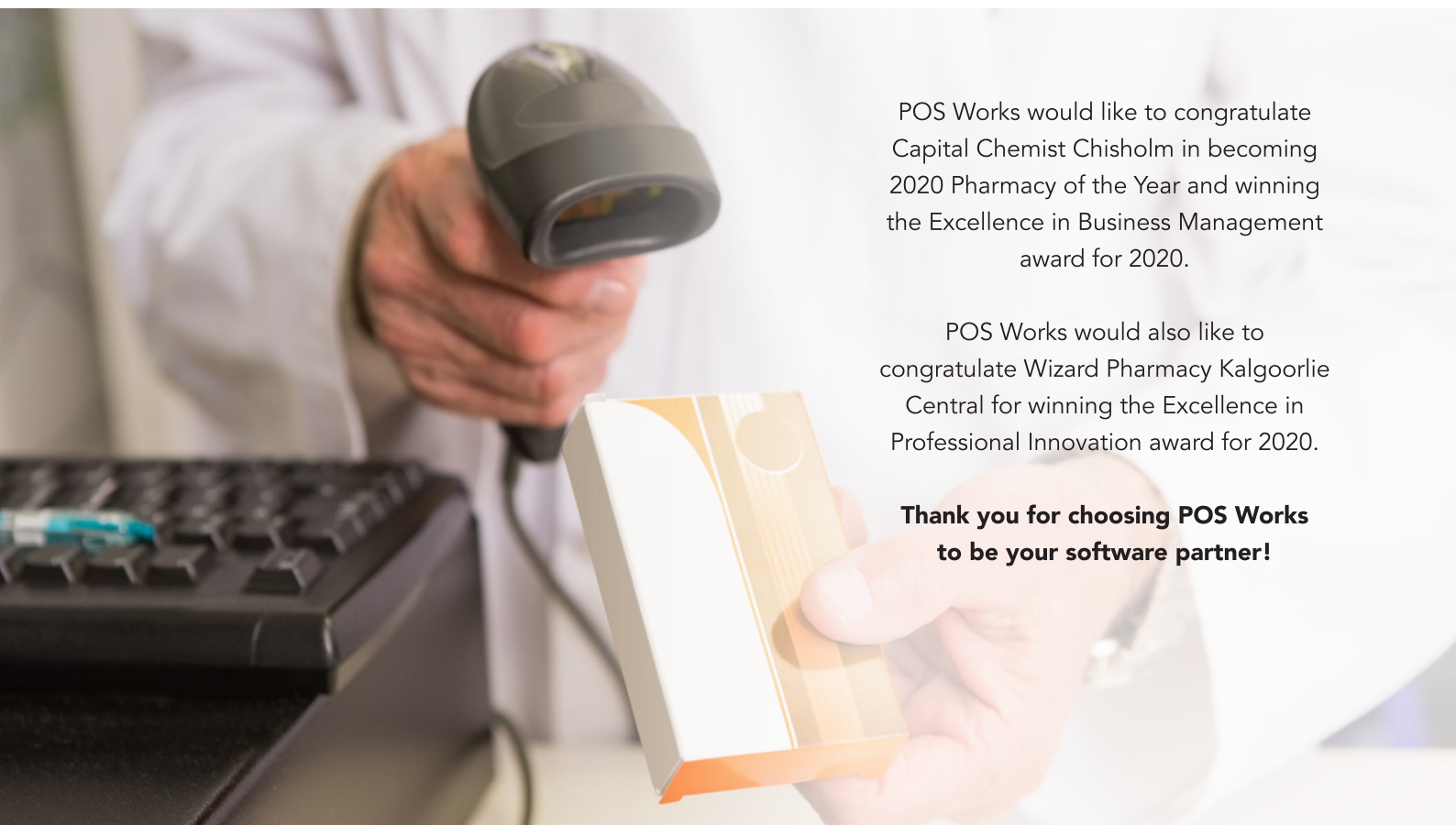


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POS Works would like to congratulate Capital Chemist Chisholm in becoming 2020 Pharmacy of the Year and winning the Excellence in Business Management award for 2020.

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

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