

## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features four pages of news, plus a full page from the **Australasian Sleep Association**.

## Asthma training

**THE** National Asthma Council is urging pharmacists to sign up for its new Asthma Best Practice education webinar ahead of the spring season.

The workshop covers a range of issues including, the association between allergic rhinitis and asthma; those at greater risk of thunderstorm asthma and guidelines for management; and the importance of written asthma action plans and asthma first-aid in thunderstorm asthma season.

**CLICK HERE** for more information about the National Asthma Council's programs.

## Hunt extends COVID HMS measures

**FUNDING** for emergency healthcare measures including pharmacy's Home Medicines Service (HMS) will continue for another six months, Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, announced this morning.

Hunt revealed that the Federal Government will invest more than \$2 billion to ensure the continuation of services including medicines delivery, telehealth consultations and GP-led respiratory clinics, until 31 Mar 2021.

In a Twitter post Hunt said "by providing telehealth and home delivery medicine services we are reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the community, while also supporting people in isolation to get the care they need".

The move has been welcomed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, with a spokesperson telling *Pharmacy Daily*, "it's fit for the times", noting close to one million deliveries were made under the



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scheme by 31 Jul.

"It's good that it's been extended, because it's needed," the spokesperson said.

"It's support for getting medicines where they're needed, but we do make the point that we shouldn't misunderstand that face-to-face contact with health professionals, including doctors and pharmacists is still the preferred norm."

The Guild spokesperson also noted that a lot of pharmacies have been providing home delivery

services for some time and "may or may not have engaged in the scheme".

While funding has been allocated to continue to support free home medicines delivery services for eligible patients, which had been due to expire at the end of Sep, the Federal Government has yet to extend continued dispensing measures to ensure access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme funded medications in emergency situations.

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\*Lopatka L et al., J fur Menopause 2007;2:3-7. Schellenberg et al., Evid Based Complement Alternat Med 2012. Drewe J et al., Phytomedicine 2013;15(20):659-666.





## Patient safety a global emergency

**PHARMACISTS** must be given access to the tools to support patient safety, the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) believes.

Launching FIP's policy statement on patient safety, newly elected FIP Vice President, and University of Sydney School of Pharmacy Professor of Medicines Use Optimisation, Parisa Aslani, (**PD** 14 Sep), highlighted the role of pharmacists in tackling what has become an international public health issue.

"Patient safety has become a global emergency," she said.

"Medication safety is a large component of this and encompasses preventing medication errors and medication-related harm, particularly in relation to high-risk medications and polypharmacy, and optimising safe medication use at each stage of a patient's medication-use journey, notably at the transitions of care.



"The role of pharmacists and pharmacy teams in patient safety requires recognition and support by healthcare organisations and regulatory bodies."

Aslani said the policy statement set out recommendations for governments, policy-makers, pharmacists and the pharmaceutical industry in the areas of advocacy, training and resources.

"Our goal is to increase the safe and effective use of medications,

prevent errors and decrease the risk of harm associated with health care," she said.

"FIP encourages all healthcare professionals and other key stakeholders, including patients and their caregivers, managers, policy-makers and educators, to consider designing and optimising services collaboratively to improve patient safety."

**CLICK HERE** to read the policy statement in full.

## Skin cancer awareness push

**HEALTH** professionals including pharmacists need to play a role in dispelling common misconceptions about "hidden cancers" such as non-melanoma skin cancer, experts believe.

Speaking after the launch of a new report by PwC focused on the burden of non-melanoma skin cancer, Associate Professor Alex Guminski, from the Northern Sydney Cancer Centre at Royal North Shore Hospital, said Australians have blind spots when it comes to non-melanoma skin cancers.

"The stark reality is the mortality rate for non-melanoma skin cancer is significant and by some estimates could be responsible for more deaths in Australia than melanoma in the coming years," he said.



## POINT OF SALE

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## Turn the tide on meds safety: SHPA

**HOSPITAL** pharmacists are calling for action to be taken across four priority areas to counter the risk of medicine-related harm.

In a Medication Safety Position Statement released to coincide with World Patient Safety Day, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has urged authorities to harness the hospital pharmacy workforce to implement evidence-based service changes to boost quality use of medicines.

The statement calls for the expansion of partnered pharmacist medication charting to all Australian hospitals, noting it has been proven to reduce the proportion of inpatients with at least one medication error by 62.4% compared with traditional medication charting, while also cutting the length of inpatient stays by 10.6%.

The SHPA has also called for the use of interim medication charts in key transitions of care settings; seven-day extended hours access

to clinical pharmacy services in all health settings where medications are used; and the introduction of pharmacist-led medication safety programs in all hospitals.

Launching the policy, SHPA CEO, Kristin Michaels, said hospital pharmacists are critical to the collective effort to bolster health outcomes through quality use of medicines in Australia.

"All Australians are entitled to safe, effective and timely medication management services while they are undergoing medical treatment," she said.

"With the use of medication the most common healthcare intervention, and more than nine million Australians taking a prescribed medication every day, medication safety is core business for all health service organisations.

"Pharmacists are experts in medication management and should be integrated into the multidisciplinary healthcare team, working in partnership with



health practitioners, patients and consumers to lead, facilitate and promote high standards of safe and timely prescribing, dispensing, administration and monitoring of medicines.

"We are proud to release SHPA's Medication Safety Position Statement today, which supports this crucial endeavour, unlocking the potential of hospital pharmacists to ensure safe and optimal medication use for all Australians."

## NSW pharmacies trial digital ID

**PHARMACISTS** and patients at five NSW pharmacies are providing positive feedback on a pilot program allowing the use of the State's digital driver's licence (DDL) for the sale of pseudoephedrine, Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello, reports.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly on Wed, Dominello, said the *Road Transport Amendment (Digital Licensing) Bill 2020* would give the digital licence the same status as the traditional ID card.

"A key industry that will benefit from this bill is pharmacies," he said.

"On 03 Jul Service NSW began a pilot with five community pharmacies to ensure there are no barriers to accepting the DDL for proof of identity [and] feedback from both pharmacists and customers has been positive."

## Pharmacist offers free flu jabs in Qld

**QUEENSLANDERS** clearly heeded advice to get their influenza vaccines early this year Bundaberg pharmacy owner, Tim Spargo, believes.

Spargo told news website, *Bundaberg Now* that he had placed an initial order for 200 doses of the vaccine which were snapped up within four days, with a subsequent batch of 200 jabs lasting just eight days.

However, he said that doses from a third order are still in stock and he is now offering to administer them to patients free of charge to avoid wastage.

"People obviously heeded the call to get in early, because demand has dropped off," he said.

Spargo said there would be no charge for the vaccine and no need to book an appointment.

Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 7pm (AEST)

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## NZ promise

**NEW** Zealand's opposition National Party has promised to expand the scope of services offered by the country's pharmacies if it takes power in next month's election.

The party's health policy was released this week, with funding of NZ\$10 million for the pharmacy plan over the next four years.

## ARTG cream cuts

**ADVERTISING** for first aid creams containing buprenorphine becomes illegal from today in Australia, under new Therapeutic Goods Administration guidelines following a safety alert earlier this month advising of the risk of serious skin reactions.

Twelve topical first aid creams containing buprenorphine are being removed from the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods today due to concerns about allergic contact dermatitis.

## NPSA hails ACCC tick

**THE** National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA) has welcomed an Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) decision which allows wholesalers to continue to cooperate during the pandemic.

The Final Determination by the ACCC was issued yesterday, confirming a previous interim ruling in Mar and now allowing NPSA member wholesalers to continue to cooperate until 30 Sep 2021.

NPSA members include Symbion, Sigma, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API) and National Pharmacies, with the authorisation also covering other CSO distributors including Barrett Distributors and Clifford Hallam Healthcare.

The Commission said authorising the cooperation was likely to result in a range of public benefits, including facilitating and promoting a sustainable and strong supply chain, particularly in relation to life-saving medicines and pharmacy products in short supply.

It will also amplify the effectiveness of Government

and other bodies' responses to COVID-19, and promote continued equitable access to products.

However in relation to concerns about detriments due to competitors sharing information and working together, the ACCC has imposed conditions requiring the NPSA to provide fortnightly reports, describing any meetings, discussions, developments and decisions in relation to the collaboration as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

The reports will be published on the ACCC's public register.

NPSA Chairman, Richard Vincent from API, said the determination was welcome, coming at a critical time as the health sector plans for the logistical roll-out of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

"We are pleased to be able to continue working together and supporting government at this difficult time," Vincent said, noting that NPSA had formed a highly productive working group to help ensure community access to medicines.

## Dispensary Corner

**WORKPLACE** disputes are unfortunately not uncommon, and occasionally tensions can run a little high, but its important not to do anything you might regret later.

We suspect Georgian Rugby Union (GRU) Vice President, Merab Beselia, may be questioning the merits of his approach to resolving a conflict with former Sevens international player, Ramaz Kharazishvili.

Beselia found himself on the wrong side of the law on Wed after shooting Kharazishvili in the leg at the sport's national governing body's offices in Tbilisi.

Reports have noted that Kharazishvili has been a vocal critic of the GRU, accusing the organisation's Interim President, Giorgi Gorgaslidze, of derailing efforts to implement a taskforce to manage the sport through the COVID-19 pandemic.

A spokesperson for the Georgian Interior Ministry said an investigation has been launched for "intentional less grave bodily injury" and illegal arms possession.

Let this serve as a reminder that no matter how stressful a situation at work may be, using a weapon against a colleague - or anyone else for that matter - is never a good idea.

Thankfully, Kharazishvili is in a stable condition after undergoing surgery to remove a bullet from his left shin at Caucasus Medical Centre in Tbilisi.

## Win With John Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and John Plunkett's are giving away a SuperBright Exfoliating Skin Brightener Serum worth RRP \$29.95



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## Cruise deal for pharmacy staff

**MSC Cruises** is offering frontline health professionals discounts of up to 50% off its fares, with pharmacists and pharmacy staff able to access the deals via any travel agency.

The offer, which aims to extend a heartfelt thanks for COVID-19 efforts, is valid on any sailings until the end of 2021 (except for MSC World Cruises) for bookings confirmed up until 30 Apr.

For more information on the MSC offer [CLICK HERE](#).





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*"Sleep is such a critical part of good health, that all of us working in pharmacy can benefit from this type of education. I have found ASA resources to be incredibly useful in my day to day pharmacist life, and not just for delivery of sleep apnoea services."*

Todd Marion, Pharmacist and Co-Proprietor, Kiama Pharmacy NSW



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