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## Hunt open to Guild COVAX proposal

FEDERAL Health Minister, Greg Hunt, hopes to “reach a landing” on plans to accelerate the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) through community pharmacies within the next two weeks.

Hunt described a proposal from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, which would see regional, rural and remote pharmacies in areas with limited or no access to GP services, join the Federal Government’s COVAX campaign in Phase 1b, rather than in Phase 2a as originally planned.

The Guild’s “fast start pharmacy” proposal would allow approved pharmacies in areas such as Cape York, Mount Isa and Magnetic Island to administer shots as soon as the Minister gives the green light, the *Courier Mail* reported.

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, said efforts to accelerate the involvement of community pharmacies would help Australia reach herd immunity faster than through the proposed mass vaccination hubs proposed by the NSW State Government (*PD* 16 Apr).

“Let’s leave the large Soviet-style mass vaccination hubs as a measure of last resort,” he said.

In recent weeks Twomey has



highlighted the successful role that pharmacists in the US have played in the COVAX rollout.

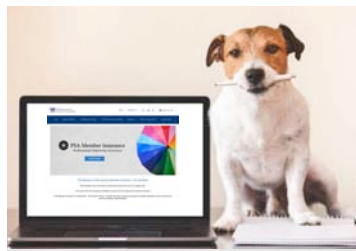
Pushing home the potential of pharmacies, Twomey shared an article from the *Wall Street Journal*, which noted that New York’s “small non-chain pharmacies are able to serve those reluctant or unable to travel to mass-vaccination sites or navigate online registration, as well as those hesitant to get the shot”, by virtue of being local, to the Facebook accounts of Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and Hunt.

**MEANWHILE**, the Guild is partnering with the Society of

Hospital Pharmacists of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia to conduct a survey to help identify the prevalence of medicines shortages, their impact on pharmacy practice, patient care and to evaluate awareness of the new medicines shortages reforms. **CLICK HERE** to participate in the survey.

**Today's issue of PD**

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



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AUSTRALIAN MEDICINES HANDBOOK

## Pharmacists to improve stroke care

**ADDING** an emergency medicine pharmacist to stroke call-out teams can help cut the average time to administer treatment to a patient by 12 minutes, a study by researchers from Monash University reveals.

The authors noted an audit conducted by the Australian Stroke Foundation in 2019 found approximately 30% of patients in Australia receive thrombolysis in accordance with the guidelines, which recommend it should be provided within 60 minutes of arrival at hospital.

Alfred Hospital Emergency Medicine Lead Pharmacist and Monash University PhD candidate, Cristina Roman, said that prior to the redesign of the acute stroke response system in Jul 2014, she had regularly been asked to assist with double-checking thrombolysis doses due to the high-risk nature of the medication and the infrequency of administration.

The study - published in the *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics* - included data relating to patients who presented at a major referral hospital in Melbourne during emergency medicine pharmacist working hours and were thrombolysed in the emergency department for stroke between Dec 2011 and Jun 2014 (before the redesign of the response system), compared with those admitted between Jul 2014 and Aug 2019.

Roman found that the median "door to needle time" reduced from 73 minutes in the pre-redesign cohort, to 61 minutes in the post-redesign group.

Monash University Department of Neuroscience Stroke Group Lead and Alfred Hospital Stroke Clinic Head, Professor Geoff Cloud, noted that emergency medicine pharmacists were not commonly involved in the management of critically unwell patients



in Australia, despite clinical pharmacy being a "flourishing area of practice elsewhere".

"[Emergency medicine pharmacists'] value as medication experts allows clinicians to focus on assessment and diagnosis of stroke and add to the efficiency and accuracy of care provided," he said.

Meanwhile researchers from Monash University said they intended to conduct further research to explore the direct impact and cost-effectiveness of 24-hour emergency medicine pharmacists attending stroke calls.

## Guild Update

### World Immunisation Week

**THE** importance of being vaccinated has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and with Australia entering the flu season the need to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and the flu is a focus of World Immunisation Week this year.

Immunisation saves millions of lives every year and is widely recognised as one of the world's most successful health interventions.

World Immunisation Week 2021 will urge greater engagement around immunisation globally to promote the importance of vaccination in bringing people together, and improving the health and wellbeing of everyone, everywhere throughout life.

As part of the 2021 campaign, this year running from 24-30 April, there will be an emphasis on increasing trust and confidence in vaccines to maintain or increase vaccine acceptance, and increasing investment in vaccines, including routine immunisation, to remove barriers to access.

More details are available on [World Immunisation Week](#) webpage.

### QLD Guild backs Parkinson's fundraiser

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch, has made a \$3,000 contribution to support State MP, Joe Kelly's efforts to raise funds for Parkinson's Queensland.

Kelly and his family have raised more than \$65,000 through their Really Big Walk initiative, which will see the MP walk 239km from Coolool to Brisbane to support those impacted by the disease.

Qld Guild Acting Branch President, Chris Owen, said he

was delighted to be supporting the campaign.

"We are thrilled to be able to assist Kelly's tremendous efforts to support Parkinson's Queensland," Owen said.

"There is not a day that goes by where our community pharmacists are not working with someone in the community who this disease has impacted, so we are very pleased to play this part."

**CLICK HERE** to support Kelly's Really Big Walk.

### Bladder anxiety

**HERBAL** formula, Urox, can help support patients living with bladder issues to do the things they love, without fear.

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See **page four** for more.

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## Dispensary Corner

**NEVER** has Viagra been so soft as at new The Bourdon Street Chemist in London's Mayfair. The city centre "pharmacy" stocks 15,000 products, from the infamous erectile dysfunction treatment to pregnancy tests and cosmetics. Unfortunately for those looking for a cure for whatever ails them, this is not the pharmacy for them, with all the products made from felt as part of an art installation created by the National Felt Service founder, Lucy Sparrow.

"When you come through the door of the Bourdon Street Chemist, you're immediately hit by the smell of TCP – a real medicinal smell, which is something I was really keen to capture," Sparrow said.

"You can look around and if you would like to buy then pop it in your basket and come to the counter where you are given a felt prescription for what you need.

"I write down the medication, sign the prescription and then that is your receipt."

## Robber needed medicines review

**FAMILY** members of a Tasmanian man who held-up a Hobart pharmacy last year are calling for a "big revamp" of mental health care in the state.

The Hobart Supreme Court heard John Saether threatened a pharmacist and demanded medication during an attempted robbery at Guardian Pharmacy in Rosetta, north of the Tasmanian capital, before stabbing the window of an unmarked police car, in Apr 2020, *ABC News* reported.

However, Saether's mother, Rita O'Rourke, told reporters outside the court that the incident could have been avoided had he received more comprehensive care after being admitted to the Royal Hobart Hospital mental health unit days before the attempted robbery.

"A week and a half before that incident, I had taken him personally to the [Royal Hobart Hospital] because he was suicidal," she said.

"They let him out the next day - no review of medication, nothing. He needed to be seen to, live for a while in a mental health unit to stabilise his drug use and get his medication sorted."

Saether's sister, Jessica Grieve, said her brother's actions showed that "mental health in Tasmania



needs a big revamp", adding patients with mental health issues needed more support.

During the sentencing hearing yesterday, Justice Stephen Estcourt, noted that Saether suffered from

bipolar disorder and had been self-medicating at the time, having run out of prescription medications after becoming unwell and self-isolating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Pharmacist loses business over fraud

**DUPLICATE** claims for services provided at pharmacies owned by Irish pharmacist, John Corr, have cost him his business.

Corr pleaded guilty to seven counts of dishonestly inducing the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Primary Care Reimbursement Scheme, by making duplicate claims for medications dispensed

at his pharmacies.

The Dublin Circuit Criminal Court heard a police investigation was launched after above average payments were made to Corr's pharmacy in Mell, Co Louth, *The Irish Times* reported.

Corr was charged with obtaining €3,988.79 through his deception and lost his contract with the HSE.

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\*Schoendorfer et al, BMC-CAM, January, 2018. Research funded by the Australian Federal Government and Seipel Group.  
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