



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news plus the **MIMS August update**.

Tassie vacancy

THE Tasmanian Pharmacy Authority has opened applications for two vacancies on its Board, including a Pharmacist Member and a Community Representative.

Due to commence in Oct 2021, applicants for the pharmacist role must hold current general registration and it is expected that they will reside in Tasmania.

Members should be able to give an "active commitment to the regulatory work of the Tasmanian Pharmacy Authority," which meets monthly in Hobart, Launceston or via teleconference.

Expressions of interest should be lodged by 28 Aug - see pharmacyauthority.tas.gov.au.

Pharmacists exasperated by rollout

MOVES to activate community pharmacies as COVID-19 vaccination sites is welcome, but the profession is "exasperated" by the Federal Government's delay in extending the immunisation services to the sector, pharmacist and Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health, Emma McBride, says.

Addressing the House of Representatives yesterday, McBride, said pharmacists were "ready and they've been prepared" for months.

"I've heard from so many pharmacists who are just exasperated," she said.

"They put in expressions of interest back in Feb and welcomed the Health Minister's announcement earlier in the year that they'd be part of the rollout.

"But up until now very few of them have been part of the vaccine rollout.

"In my community [on the NSW Central Coast], they've only been able to start this week.



"What we know is that in countries across the world where pharmacists have been involved in the vaccine rollout they have seen higher rates of vaccination.

"We know that in some countries we've seen rates of 60 to 70% where they have relied on a network of pharmacists and GPs who are known in their local community and who are trusted.

"In communities where there's no other health support, there's often a pharmacy there.

"While I welcome pharmacists' involvement in the vaccine rollout, I am so disappointed, as are pharmacists across Australia, that their skills and expertise weren't drawn on earlier.

"They've just been sidelined, waiting to contribute, to do their bit to help with the vaccine rollout."

McBride also raised concerns over moves to redirect doses of the Pfizer vaccine allocated for patients on the Central Coast for school students in Sydney.

FIP 2021 global pharmacy report is out

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has released its *Community Pharmacy Global Report 2021*, detailing the findings of a survey of the sector across 79 countries between Nov 2020 and Jan 2021.

The comprehensive summary covers scope of practice, regulation, distribution of medicines and remuneration, with a total of 1.87 million pharmacists actively working in community pharmacies in the nations that contributed to the FIP research.

Interesting findings include

that the density of pharmacists in Europe is seven times that of Africa, while the report also details the differing range of services that community pharmacies are allowed to provide beyond dispensing, such as emergency contraception, therapeutic substitution, independent and emergency prescribing and point-of-care testing for COVID-19.

FIP also summarised the various remuneration and pharmacy ownership models across the globe.

Download the report at fip.org.

Chemist Warehouse flags Irish growth

CHEMIST Warehouse has confirmed plans to open ten more stores across Ireland over the next 18 months.

The company established an Irish beachhead almost a year ago (**PD** 27 Oct 2020) with an outlet in the Dublin suburb of Blanchardstown, followed by a second Henry Street store about six weeks ago (**PD** 24 Jun).

The UK *Times* newspaper cited unnamed property sources confirming Chemist Warehouse was on the hunt for "properties to rent in prime areas across Ireland," along with expectations

the expansion would create at least 250 more local jobs.

MEANWHILE Chemist Warehouse has also announced an investment in Fiji Kava Limited, with the pharmacy group taking a 10% stake in the medicinal kava supplier just two months after its product range launched into Chemist Warehouse stores.

Chemist Warehouse Chairman, Jack Gance, said "this investment signals our strong belief in Fiji Kava as a company that has something truly unique to offer in the natural medicine market".



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Community focus drives COVAX push

DRIVEN by the desire to play a part in the push to get 80% of Australians vaccinated against COVID-19 and restore a semblance of normality to the community is a major factor behind Narwee Pharmacy co-owner, Joe Keledjian's decision to join the vaccine rollout.

The family owned pharmacy located in southwest Sydney, joined the COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) campaign on Sat, with Keledjian administering doses to 50 patients - including 20 walk-ins and an elderly couple in their 90s.

The store has set up a weekly vaccine clinic, which has seen additional staffing requirements and related costs, with the goal of supporting the community.

"We wanted to be part of this rollout because it's a community service really," he said.

"We're aware that pharmacies are very well positioned to deliver this very easily - most of us have been vaccinating for a long time.

"It's a lot of extra effort and extra work.



"This is not a financial thing - let's face it, the remuneration isn't fantastic, and truth is with the amount of staff I had to put on for that clinic I quite possibly went backwards that day, but 50 more people were vaccinated.

"The focus is the community - it always is, and now more than ever it is... and I think community pharmacy is part of that whole link of being able to get this done."

Keledjian told *Pharmacy Daily* that the patients he vaccinated last weekend were a mix of people

getting their first doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, and patients who had received their initial shot from their GP, but weren't comfortable going back to the surgery due to its location or the doctor had closed the clinic's doors due to COVID-19.

"It's a shame that pharmacy wasn't engaged earlier in the process," he said.

"[But] now that we're up and running we've just go to look forward and just get this to 80% as quick as we can."

COVID test push

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration this week confirmed it was working with suppliers of rapid COVID-19 tests - called in vitro diagnostic medical devices (IVDs) - to ensure there are tests available to support efforts in managing the COVID-19 emergency.

An update for suppliers/importers of these items provides information on how to submit an application for expedited TGA assessment for inclusion of a COVID-19 test in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

It's not necessary to request priority review, the TGA said, because "all applications in relation to COVID-19 tests are already being expedited as a matter of priority in assessment queues".

Clinical performance studies detailing the sensitivity of the device are required, particularly relating to the days post onset of symptoms - more details at [tga.gov.au](https://www.tga.gov.au).

Medical cannabis now more affordable

AUSTRALIAN Natural Therapeutics Group (ANTG) has just released its first CBD oil, claiming the product is the "most affordable medical cannabis oil on the market".

CEO Matt Cantelo said the pricing of the locally made Elan CBD100 oil honoured a "commitment to improving affordability for families".

"Six months ago we made a promise to the public that we would pass on cost savings as we expanded the business," he said.

"We are following through with our commitment by offering cannabis oils at the lowest price point in the market, alongside price drops in premium flower."

Cantelo said the company's integration and economies of scale had enabled the price reductions, with the Elan oil available for \$174 for a 30ml bottle, around half the price of

some imported products.

"This will allow Australian families to access the life changing treatment that was previously out of the reach of so many," he said.

Cantelo noted recent record TGA approvals for medical cannabis prescriptions, with 9,461 recorded in Jun, the third highest monthly figure since the products were legalised and more than double the levels of 12 months ago.

"There are more than 100,000 people in Australia who heavily rely on medicinal cannabis for everything from chronic pain and anxiety to epilepsy or palliative care," he said.

The ANTG CEO confirmed that in addition to the company's growing and manufacturing facility in the New England region, a new oil extraction facility in Sydney was now open.

RACGP slams 'mix & match' suggestion

THE Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has taken exception to comments from the Queensland Government yesterday urging people to receive their first COVID-19 vaccine from their GP and the second from a pharmacy.

RACGP President Karen Price said it was "unnecessary to switch providers between doses," adding that general practice was already a "ready-made mass vaccination program equipped to do the full job".

She noted that GPs across Australia had so far delivered more than half of all COVID-19 vaccines nationwide.

"We are the backbone of the vaccine rollout, with 5,150 general practices administering vaccines and more coming on board, with 190 more practices due to join in the next fortnight. "To date, general practice has

provided over six and a half million doses across Australia."

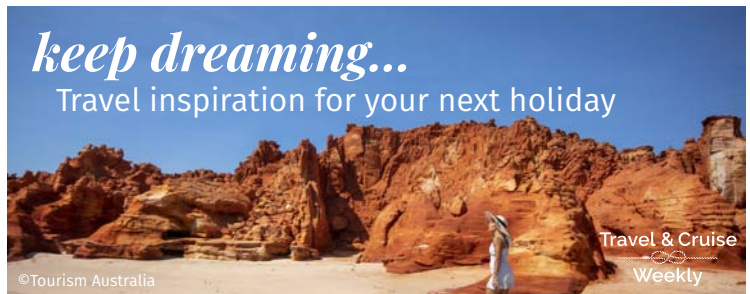
Price claimed the work being done by GPs was flying under the radar, adding that receiving both vaccine doses from the same general practice was "important for coordination of care".

"It doesn't make any sense to go to a separate provider and fragment care... general practices have the capacity to deliver both jabs, and it makes the whole process more straightforward for patients," she added.

The RACGP President said patients were free to opt to receive their vaccines from a pharmacy, insisting "this is not a matter of us versus them".

"What doesn't make sense is switching between doses."

In addition, "the mix and match model proposed by the Queensland Government today doesn't fix supply," Price added.



Dispensary Corner

IT SEEMS like everyone is joining the vaccination push in the USA, even the justice system.

A judge in Baton Rouge, Louisiana has started offering convicted offenders an alternative to completing hours of community service - simply by getting a COVID-19 inoculation.

Local TV station *WAFB* is reporting the initiative by Judge Fred Crifasi, who has apparently been proposing the job solution as a win-win, with current restrictions also making it difficult to complete community service hours - particularly as the Delta variant is likely to lead to many more positive tests and self-isolation requirements.

District Attorney Hillar Moore is supportive of the deals, saying he would like to see more judges offer jobs in lieu of community service.

"What do you want someone doing right now? Do you want them picking up trash on the side of the road or potentially donating services for good causes, or do you want someone to do something for themselves and protect others?" he said.

The offer is legally acceptable because the judge is not coercing defendants into having the vaccine.



HEALTH & BEAUTY

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au

V-Comb range for Head Lice Treatment

For families who are suffering from head lice infestations, the innovative *V-comb* range is a solution that provides a safe, *allergen- and chemical-free head lice treatment*. Unlike shampoos or lotions, the *V-comb* gets rid of chemical-resistant super lice and eggs through combing and vacuum power. With the ease of combing the hair, head lice and eggs are extracted and trapped into automatically sealing capture filters for a mess-free and hygienic disposal, while providing *immediate visible results*.

Stockist: Amcal, Blooms The Chemist, Guardian, Cincotta (Ventura), Chemist King, Discount Drug Stores, Pharmasave, Health Save, Pharmacy Choice, Priceline, Chemsave

RRP: A1 (\$72.99), SUPRA (\$59.99) and Capture Filter (\$11.99)

Website: <https://licetec.com.au/>



TePe Interdental Brushes



TePe Interdental Brushes comes in 9 colour coded sizes designed to clean the gaps between the teeth, where a regular toothbrush is unable to reach. The interdental brushes are developed in collaboration with dental experts to ensure the highest quality in every detail. More effective than flossing, daily use can remove up to 40% more plaque than toothbrushing alone. TePe Interdental Brushes have also been awarded the Australian Dental Association Seal Of Approval.

Stockist: Available from API, Symbion and Sigma
RRP: \$8.99

Website: www.tepe.com

New Products

- **Drospirenone (Slinda)**, derived from spironolactone, is a progestogen-only pill. In therapeutic dosages, drospirenone also possesses antiandrogenic and mild antimineralocorticoid properties. It has no estrogenic, glucocorticoid and antiglucocorticoid activity. This gives drospirenone a pharmacological profile closely resembling the natural hormone progesterone. Slinda is indicated for contraception. It should not be used in the presence of active venous thromboembolic disorder; presence or history of severe hepatic disease as long as liver function values have not returned to normal; severe renal insufficiency or acute renal failure; known or suspected sex-steroid sensitive malignancies; undiagnosed vaginal bleeding; or known or suspected pregnancy. Should any of the conditions appear for the first time during its use, Slinda should be discontinued immediately. Slinda tablets contain drospirenone 4 mg and are available in a pack size of 28 tablets (24 active, 4 placebo tablets) or 84 tablets (72 active, 12 placebo tablets).
- **Risdiplam (Evrysdi)** is a survival of motor neuron 2 (SMN2) pre-mRNA splicing modifier designed to treat spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) caused by mutations in chromosome 5q that lead to SMN protein deficiency. Functional SMN protein deficiency is the pathophysiological mechanism of all SMA types. Evrysdi corrects the splicing of SMN2 to shift the balance from exon 7 exclusion to exon 7 inclusion into the mRNA transcript leading to an increased production in functional and stable SMN protein. Thus, Evrysdi treats SMA by increasing and sustaining functional SMN protein levels. Evrysdi is indicated for the treatment of 5q SMA in patients aged 2 months and older. Evrysdi powder for oral solution contains risdiplam 0.75 mg/mL after reconstitution and is available in pack size of one 80 mL bottle with two 6 mL and two 12 mL reusable oral syringes and a bottle adapter.

New Presentation

- **Infliximab (rmc) (Remsima)** is now available as a solution for subcutaneous injection containing infliximab (rmc) 120 mg/mL in a pack size of one 1 mL prefilled syringe (with automatic needle guard) or prefilled pen. Subcutaneous use of Remsima is recommended for adults only.

New Indications

- **Ixekizumab (rch) (Taltz)** is now indicated for the treatment of adults with active non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis with objective signs of inflammation as indicated by elevated C-reactive protein and/or MRI evidence, who have responded inadequately to, or are intolerant to, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

New Contraindications

- **Clindamycin (phosphate)/Tretinoin (Acnatac)** is now contraindicated in patients who have a personal or familial history of skin cancer.
- **Flucytosine (Ancotil)** is now contraindicated in patients with known complete dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase deficiency.

This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month. Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.