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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news plus full pages from

- HealthOne
- MOR Boutique

## Sound advice...

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has issued a joint statement alongside the Therapeutic Goods Administration, AHPRA, the Health Care Complaints Commission and the Office of the Health Ombudsman about sorting "fact from fiction" when it comes to COVID-19 and vaccines.

The update urges that people not be "swayed by opinions" by reacting to incorrect information or sensationalised commentary, and provides a list of reliable Australian sources on the pandemic.

The statement is available in multiple languages including Arabic, Farsi, Greek, Vietnamese and Simplified Chinese as well as English, with all translations available online as PDFs at [ahpra.gov.au](http://ahpra.gov.au).

# Does pharmacy need Pfizer COVAX?

WITH close to 300,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) administered through community pharmacies some pharmacy owners are reporting a concerning rise in "no-shows" for appointments.

Data recorded by the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) showed a 62% increase in the total number of doses administered through the pharmacy network as of lunchtime yesterday, compared with Fri 20 Aug.

However, the total number of doses administered in the 10 days to 30 Aug was 17,166 fewer than in the seven days to 20 Aug, based on figures provided by the Federal Department of Health.

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily*, Sydney-based owner, Rick Samimi, said fears about the AstraZeneca vaccine appeared to be fueling last-minute cancellations.

"In the last week or so we've noticed two things are happening," he said.

"We're getting cancellations and also we've prepared a lot of vaccines, and last week some of them got wasted, because you prepared 10 vaccines, because you've eight or nine bookings for the afternoon and only three or



four people show up, so four or five doses had to be destroyed.

"I had a person in the pharmacy who was about to get the shot into their shoulder and at the very last second they said, 'no, I'm scared of AstraZeneca, I don't want it', and walked out.

"If I had Pfizer vaccines each one of my pharmacists would do 250 a week easily."

Noting comments made by National COVAX Taskforce Coordinator, Lieutenant General John Frewen, during a Pharmacy Guild of Australia COVID-19 update webinar earlier this month (*PD* 12 Aug), that pharmacy needed

to deliver on its potential, Samimi said the profession would struggle to prove itself given the level of hesitancy around the AstraZeneca vaccine.

"We can't show the numbers when we've one hand tied behind our backs," he said.

"We're being given the AstraZeneca shot at \$16, and people have massive hesitancy about it, and they go 'show us the numbers'.

"Give us the Pfizer, or at least let's hope Moderna comes in, and I'm pretty sure that between my two pharmacies we should do 400 or 500 a week easily."



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**Mor for Christmas**

MOR is today showcasing its new Enchanted Garden Christmas Gift Collection, with a range of products perfect to stuff the stockings of your pharmacy's customers.

The company is also offering complimentary products for use as in-store Gift with Purchase promotions, with deals available until 03 Oct - for more info see the **last page**.



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## Shift in attitude needed on overdose

**AUSTRALIA** needs to implement a National Overdose Prevention Strategy to reduce the numbers of drug-induced deaths seen across the country, Penington Institute CEO, John Ryan, believes.

Launching *Australia's Annual Overdose Report 2021*, Ryan noted that close to 35,000 Australians have lost their lives as a result of an overdose since the turn of the century, with 2,227 deaths in 2019.

"Overdose hides in plain sight," he said.

"Drug and alcohol poisoning, a category which is overwhelmingly made up by drug overdoses, is the second-leading cause of death for Australians in their 30s while for those in their 20s and 40s, it's the third-leading cause of death.

"It's present in every corner of our communities.

"It affects Australians of all ages, in the country and the city.

"Although you'd be forgiven for thinking that illicit drugs are the

main substances implicated in overdose, pharmaceutical drugs – opioids, benzodiazepines (sedative drugs), anti-depressants and anti-convulsants – are detected in most overdose deaths.

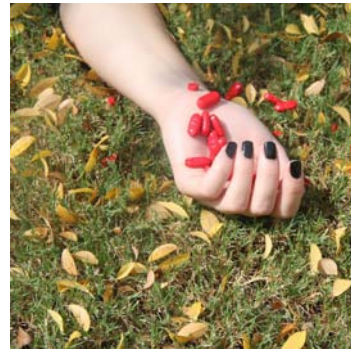
"This year's *Annual Overdose Report* contains many findings that should prompt a shift in our approach to drug policies based on lived experience and research.

"The best place to begin is with a National Overdose Prevention Strategy, developed in close collaboration with people with lived experience, frontline workers and other experts.

"It must fearlessly address the drivers of drug use, the diversity of drugs that are causing overdose and how overdose risks are evolving.

"This strategy must be developed carefully but – crucially – it must also be developed urgently."

The report found 1,644 drug-related deaths in 2019 were the result of unintentional overdose,



with opioid misuse linked to 53.6% of those fatalities.

"The number of unintentional drug-induced deaths involving opioids has nearly trebled in the last 14 years," the report said.

"While deaths involving pharmaceutical opioids have constituted the majority of unintentional deaths due to opioids since 2004, there has been a dramatic rise in deaths involving heroin since 2012, increasing from 67 in 2012 to 442 in 2019."

## Guild backs RUM

**TASMANIANS** are being encouraged to return unwanted medications (RUM) to their local pharmacy for disposal, as part of an Overdose Awareness Day campaign.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Tasmanian Branch President, Helen O'Byrne, said it was important to dispose of unused medicines carefully to avoid them being taken by children.

"We know more Tasmanians lose their life to unintended overdose than in car accidents," she said.

"Prescription medications, particularly those for pain or anxiety disorders, if not used correctly can result in unintended overdoses which can lead to hospitalisation or death."

O'Byrne said using pharmacy RUM bins would reduce the risk of medicine-related misadventure.

## PharmaCare brings Jordan back to Oz

**NATURAL** health and wellness company, PharmaCare, has appointed Zephania Jordan as its new Chief of Research and Development and Quality Officer.

The appointment will see Jordan return to Australia after holding senior positions with Reckitt Benckiser in the UK and Johnson & Johnson in the US.

"It was time for me to return to Australia and find a way to leverage my skills and experience and I wanted to find

an Australian business that has potential to grow both locally and internationally," she said.

PharmaCare fits that brief with ambitious plans to expand its business performance, innovation, and entrepreneurship, while having the health and wellbeing of people at its core.

"The company's foundational principles of 'health, family and business', also align closely with my own beliefs."

## Pizza won't cut it for tired pharmacists

**BURNT** out pharmacy staff in the US need more than free pizza to help keep them going, Oklahoma-based pharmacist, Bled Tanoe, believes.

Speaking to local broadcaster, *KOTV-DT*, Tanoe said pharmacists and pharmacy technicians were exhausted and needed relief amid a third wave of COVID-19.

Tanoe called on pharmacy groups to do more to support workers, and launched a social media campaign called

#PizzasNotWorking, with stressed out pharmacists tired of being rewarded for working grueling hours with a couple of slices.

"Something is going to have to change," she said.

"Because people are tired, people are leaving, people are suffering.

"And if retail pharmacists and technicians are not at the front of everything, who is going to fill your prescription?"



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## Dispensary Corner

AS MORE pharmacies join the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, it's inevitable that those desperate to discredit the safety and efficacy of the shots will turn their ire on pharmacy owners.

Emails have been sent to Australian pharmacies proclaiming to be from "the People/men and women of Australia", accusing immunisers of breaching the Magna Carta, the Geneva Convention, "natural law, common law, treaty law" and ordering them to "cease and desist" from administering the vaccines.

However, between the bile and vitriol about various "crimes" being committed by vaccinating people against a virus that's claimed the lives of 4.5 million people, the "do your research" brigade have delivered nuggets of comedic gold.

One particular comment posted on Facebook by a skeptic about a Sydney pharmacist's involvement in the rollout has prompted a high degree of mirth amongst the pharmacy profession.

"She will buy a new house with the Government payments per vax," the supposedly well-informed truther declared.

At \$16 a shot Dispensary Corner estimates the pharmacy owner would need to administer 87,500 doses of the vaccine - assuming that monster payment is all profit with no staffing or other costs - to rank in the \$1.4 million required to meet the median house price in Sydney... or maybe anti-vaxxers know where you can get a deal!

## Pfizer confusion in Vic

**MISSPOKEN** words by Victorian Health Minister, Michael Foley, about the availability of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines in pharmacies added increased pressure on the sector yesterday.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily* that "pharmacies were inundated with queries from the public wanting to make an appointment and access the vaccine", after the Minister told a press conference that the Pfizer shot would be available through pharmacies for patients aged 16 years and older.

"Everybody was caught off guard because the information was an error and inconsistent with what we've been advised by the Federal government to date which is that pharmacies are not expected to receive an allocation of Pfizer vaccines, but will be receiving the Moderna form of the vaccine from mid-Sep," he said.

"The public are confused and frustrated enough without our



leaders putting out the wrong information.

"Mistakes happen, but mistakes have consequences and pharmacy teams shouldn't have to clean up the mess again trying to clarify for the public what vaccines are available from where.

"It has always been the Guild's position that all approved COVID-19 vaccines should be available from pharmacies and we will continue to work with the government at both a State and Federal level to encourage maximum uptake and help our community return to as normal a life as can be."

## Blooms and Arrotex open COVAX hub

**BLOOMS** The Chemist and Arrotex Pharmaceuticals are joining forces to launch a COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) hub in Shellharbour, NSW.

Located in the pharmacy group's Shellharbour store at the Stockland Shopping Centre, pharmacists and Arrotex nurses will work together to administer vaccines to the local community.

Blooms' incoming CEO, Emmanuel Vavoulas, said the partnership was "a pivotal step for wider COVAX accessibility in the communities that need it

the most".

"Working closely with our partners across our industry broadens the possibilities in the delivery of one of the most important health programs in our nation's history," he said.

Blooms The Chemist Shellharbour Managing Pharmacist, Stephanie Ashton, said the group's teams across the country "will do whatever we can to help keep our local communities safe, and deliver these essential vaccinations as quickly as possible".

## Guild Update

### Prime Minister's commitment to pharmacy

**PRIME** Minister Scott Morrison has committed to thrashing out inconsistencies between States and Territories on key elements of the national COVID-19 vaccination rollout, including pharmacist opening hours and definitions of close or casual contact.

He made the commitment in a webinar hosted by Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Adjunct Professor Trent Twomey.

The Prime Minister also confirmed talks are underway on vaccination payments to community pharmacists.

He predicted significant change as the rollout proceeds, not least in areas such as rapid antigen testing.

Prime Minister Morrison encouraged as many pharmacists as possible to join the rollout.

"If you are ready to join the program, come on down," he said.

"The supply is there, and the distribution also."

During the webinar the Prime Minister also confirmed from mid next month, suitable pharmacies will be invited to participate in the Moderna rollout.

He said with pharmacists now widely engaged, Australia was hastening towards 70% and 80% full vaccination targets in the National Plan.

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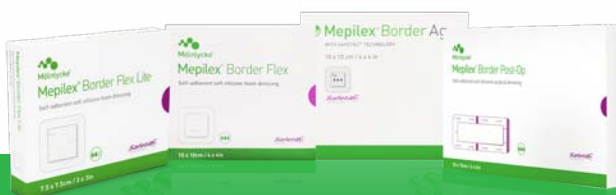
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1. Zurcher S, Krapfl L, Burds A. Reducing postoperative surgical site infections in coronary artery bypass graft patients. Poster presentation at the 45th Annual Conference of the Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society, Seattle, WA, US 2013.

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