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TWC takes flight with rural delivery

TERRYWHITE Chemmart (TWC) is set to trial a remotely operated drone delivery service for patients in rural parts of Queensland.

The project, backed by wholesaler, Symbion, has been developed with drone-powered health logistics company, Swoop Aero, and will support TWC pharmacies to ensure equitable access to medicines regardless of a patient's location.

Symbion CEO, Brett Barons, said the service could be critical for maintaining medicines supplies during crises.

"Not only is this a very convenient option for the delivery of medicines for those living outside of ready access to their pharmacy but, as we saw during the terrible bushfires in Australia last summer, there were cases where road access to some homes and towns was completely shut off," he said.

"To have a drone to provide deliveries of medicines could be of critical importance in situations where accessibility is limited."

The drones have a range of 130km and can travel at speeds of up to 115km/h and withstand wind speeds of up to 50km/h and heavy rain.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia 2017



Pharmacy of the Year winner, TWC Goondiwindi, has been selected to trial the service, with owner, Lucy Walker, confident the service will be a significant boost for rural health.

"Many of my customers live on farms or small towns in outlying areas. In some cases a visit to our pharmacy to collect their vital medicines may mean a three-hour round trip," she said.

"With the ability to service people within a 130km range of Goondiwindi, this drone trial will provide enormous convenience and peace of mind for many of our

customers.

"Importantly, we will learn a great deal from the trial, what works well, and what may need improving.

"We can use these learnings to not only fine tune the service to our community but also share with other regional TWC pharmacies around Australia who may be looking to investigate a drone delivery service."

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news.



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GP pharmacists cut ED presentations

HAVING pharmacists integrated into general practice teams to review patients' medication use cuts emergency department (ED) presentations due to medicine-related harm, research reveals.

The Reducing Medical Admissions into Hospital through Optimising Medicines (REMAIN HOME) trial, featured 306 patients, with 177 in the control group, while 129 received a comprehensive face-to-face medicine management consultation with an integrated pharmacist within seven days of their hospital discharge, *MJA InSight* reported.

Research leader from the University of Queensland, Associate Professor Christopher Freeman, reported that by 12 months follow-up there have been 282 readmissions amongst the control group and 136 in the intervention population, with the difference not deemed to be

statistically different.

However, Freeman noted that ED presentation and combined readmission and ED presentation incidence were significantly lower for the intervention group.

Freeman estimated that the incremental net cost benefit of the intervention was \$5,072 per patient.

"The incidence of ED presentations (54% lower) and the combined incidence of hospital readmissions and ED presentations (31% lower) were each statistically significantly lower during the intervention," he said.

"As the incidence of re-admissions was significantly lower at 30 days, additional intervention by pharmacists and GP teams may be required after the initial intervention."

Freeman added that pharmacists involved in the intervention group were able to identify poor medication adherence, which



was noted as a common factor in patients being readmitted to hospital.

"GPs having additional clinical information and tacit knowledge about their patients may also be beneficial," he said.

"As the proportions of patients who saw their GP within a week of discharge were similar for both groups (about 60%), lower hospital use was probably more attributable to the consultation with the pharmacist than early GP review."

Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is



Janice Hoogeveen, Group Marketing Manager at TerryWhite Chemmart.

Brand awareness is reaping rewards

STAYING true to our brand purpose and increasing investment in brand awareness during a pandemic is reaping rewards.

This time last year when our marketing team was faced with multiple considerations and meeting an urgent need to create messaging and assets to reassure our customers and network partners, never was there a more salient time to apply the fundamentals of marketing - Understand your customer, focus on your brand purpose, and over communicate both internally and externally.

'Pivot' was the word of 2020. And 'pivot' we did with almost every campaign, marketing asset and channel. Whilst we tailored our message to reflect the changing situation, we stayed true to our purpose to deliver more personalised health solutions and support our pharmacists to build deeper connections with their local communities. We delivered a 41% increase in media investment to educate customers on our new remote offerings; shop online, telehealth, click and collect and home delivery. With more customers at home, it was no surprise we saw a 70% increase in traffic to our refreshed website and our catalogue program generated a 12% increase in promotional sales YOY. With our share of voice increasing for the last 12 months, we are now the number 2 investor in media in the retail pharmacy industry and thanks to the quality service provided by our pharmacists and their teams, TerryWhite Chemmart is number 1 in the Roy Morgan Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Pharmacists ready for COVAX rollout

PHARMACISTS from across Australia are preparing to play their role in the national COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

More than 700 pharmacists joined a webinar on Thu, hosted by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), which covered the Federal Government's rollout plans, information about training, a state-by-state implementation and the role pharmacists will play.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, said the attendance rate showed high levels of interest in providing vaccines amongst pharmacists.

"Pharmacists are well placed to assist in this program, and the attendance at [the webinar] clearly demonstrates the commitment of our members," he said.

Pfizer heats up

COVID-19 vaccine collaborators, Pfizer and BioNTech, are hoping new temperature data could make their vaccination more pharmacy-friendly.

The partners have submitted evidence to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to support adjusting storage requirements from the current -80 to -60° celsius to -25° to -15°C for a total of two weeks.

BioNTech CEO, Ugur Sahin, told *Reuters* that "the data submitted may facilitate the handling of our vaccine in pharmacies and provide vaccination centres with even greater flexibility".

The World Health Organization said lowering cold chain requirements could broaden the vaccine's reach.

Meanwhile the FDA has already approved storage requirements of -25° to -15°C for Moderna's mRNA vaccine.

Win an Evolt 360 package

This week Pharmacy Daily & Evolt are giving away an Evolt 360 Body Composition package valued at \$2500 - a high tech body composition platform that is proven to increase profitability, drive foot traffic, whilst engaging with the local community and establishing brand loyalty. To learn more click [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) to enter & to see last weeks winner.

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Dispensary Corner

THERE'S a major obesity crisis in the Middle Eastern nation of Bahrain, but it's birds, not people who are the target of widespread concerns.

Apparently the very popular local dish of machboos is also a hit with seagulls, who are delightfully feasting on discarded trays of the delicious spicy chicken and rice.

Officials have called for a clean-up to force a bit of weight loss on the birds, who have abandoned their traditional ocean feeding grounds in favour of the discarded leftovers which they scoff so much they can't fly.

"We can see them walking on the ground, it's like they just left work and came home for lunch...all that's left to do for these birds is to set them up with a jug of juice and a range of desserts," said Abdullah Al Qubaisi, a local councillor.

According to *Gulf News*, he said fat seagulls staggering around the streets were "bringing down the reputation of respectable neighbourhoods".

Class action threat no distraction: API

THREATS of an "imminent class action" by a former Priceline Pharmacy franchisee are not distracting the API-owned banner from supporting its members, the company says.

Priceline Pharmacy General Manager, Andrew Vidler, told *Pharmacy Daily* that "as of today there is still no class action", despite Sydney-based law firm, Levitt Robinson, advertising that a case was "imminent" since May last year (PD 06 May 2020).

"Apparently, it can only proceed if enough franchisees agree to a funding agreement.

"We understand the lead applicant in the proposed action is a former Priceline franchisee who is no longer with the brand.

"Priceline remains focused on supporting our franchisees through these difficult times and doing our utmost to help ensure that they can fully play their role in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations.

"We will protect the brand and business we have built together.

"We have no further comment to make on this matter."

In its initial notice to Priceline Pharmacy franchisees, Levitt Robinson said the proposed



action was to "obtain a fairer franchise agreement", add value to the investment made by existing franchisees and secure compensation "for any proven infringing conduct, including loss of profits".

The firm alleges that many franchise agreements between Priceline Pharmacy and pharmacy owners "may breach the current legislative framework which governs pharmacies in NSW, Queensland and Victoria".

However, a spokesperson for the

Pharmacy Council of NSW, which regulates pharmacy ownership, told *Pharmacy Daily* (PD 07 May 2020) it reviews franchise agreements for compliance with schedule 5F of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) and in particular the provisions related to financial interests, in relation to stores in the state.

"The Council will not approve an application supported by a franchise agreement which contravenes schedule 5F of the Law," the spokesperson said.

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