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Today's issue of *PD Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news.

GPs welcome telehealth boost

NEW Medicare patient rebates for extended telehealth consultations with patients in COVID-19 hotspots is being welcomed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

RACGP President, Dr Karen Price, said the move announced by Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, "will make a real difference in ensuring access to care for patients in hotspots".

"With an extended lockdown in Greater Sydney and COVID-19 cases in other states, we need this more than ever," Price said.

She said the service would support continuity of care.

NSW pharmacies start COVAX rollout

SEVERAL community pharmacies in regional and rural NSW are starting to receive their first allocations of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX), with Capital Chemist Braidwood administering initial shots today.

The pharmacy, which is part of a 22-store trial program, is set to be joined by hundreds more in the coming weeks as NSW grapples with its latest COVID outbreak.

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily*, Capital Chemist Braidwood Managing Partner, Kayla Lee, said the pharmacy had a full day of bookings scheduled for today.

"We've had really high demand," she said.

"Then with the amendment to be able to vaccinate those over 40 [and not just the over 60s as originally planned] we've had even more demand from that age group as well, which is really good."

The Braidwood pharmacy received 300 doses of the

AstraZeneca vaccine on Wed, with Lee noting the store will be able to make weekly orders of a minimum quantity of 100 doses going forward.

"At the rate that we've got them booked in at the moment, we'll probably be looking at doing another order in about a fortnight," she said.

"Then it takes a week or two to arrive, so we're anticipating this lot will last us about a month, but we'll see how demand goes."

With pressure growing to boost vaccination services in Sydney's COVID hotspot areas of Fairfield, Liverpool and Canterbury-Bankstown, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, expects at least 70 local pharmacies to join the COVAX rollout campaign by the end of next week, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) reported.

"We think this will make a huge difference, and our hope is that



pharmacies across the country will be able to eventually offer a number of different COVID-19 vaccines, including Pfizer, for all patients," Twomey said.

A further 365 pharmacies in the Greater Sydney area are due to commence COVAX services within the next month, with the Guild's Find A Pharmacy website listing stores in the city's Woolloomooloo and St Ives areas as offering shots.

However, McDonalds Pharmacy St Ives owner, Jacinta McDonald, told *Pharmacy Daily* that the North Shore pharmacy is not due to receive vaccines until 16 Aug.

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NZ vax push

STAFF at Waitara Pharmacy in New Zealand's Taranaki will undertake COVID-19 vaccinations next week, in a program ramping up efforts to help protect the region against the infection.

A Spanish fishing vessel is currently being kept offshore from Taranaki Port while its crew, who are suffering flu-like symptoms, await COVID test results.

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Pharmacy staff still waiting for COVAX

COMMUNITY pharmacy workers need to be given priority access to COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX), to ensure stores can remain open in areas affected by outbreaks, Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch Vice President, Catherine Bronger, believes.

Speaking with *Pharmacy Daily*, Bronger, whose 24-hour Chemistworks pharmacy in Wetherill Park has had 10 positive cases come through the doors, called for pharmacy staff to be prioritised for vaccination alongside aged care workers.

"It's really hard for us to access the vaccines for the staff," she said.

"And if they expect us to keep the doors open and keep the staff safe they need to prioritise the vaccine - and the Pfizer vaccine specifically - for pharmacy staff like they have with aged care.

"They should be able to get in tomorrow for vaccination."

Adding an additional challenge to protecting staff, Bronger said there was an inconsistency in

understanding that pharmacy assistants are healthcare workers on the frontline.

"I know it's written in [that] they're in 1B [of the rollout program], but there's a lack of understanding in the system and a lack of messaging to them," she said.

"Then once it all blew up it was impossible to get in [for a vaccine]."

Bronger added that the delay in activating community pharmacies as vaccine sites exacerbated the issue, with eligible staff expecting to have their shot in-store.

"Because we got approved back in Mar a lot of the workforce just expected a common sense approach from the Government to roll out the vaccines to community pharmacies as soon as we were approved," she said.

Capital Chemist Braidwood Managing Partner, Kayla Lee, who started administering doses of the AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine this morning, also said it was challenging getting staff



immunised, with many of her team under 40 years, and ineligible to get the AZ shot.

Lee told *Pharmacy Daily* that team members had tried to access appointments to get the Pfizer vaccine through NSW Health sources, but had been unsuccessful.

"Luckily one of our doctors' surgeries has started administering Pfizer from Sat, so all the staff are getting vaccinated on Sat, which is good," she said.

New dog therapy

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted approval for Tanovea (rabacfosadine injection) for the treatment of canine lymphoma.

Tanovea is the first conditionally approved new animal drug for dogs to achieve the FDA's full approval, with the tick granted using the FDA's new MUMS (Minor Use and Minor Species) animal drug approval process, which aims to make more medications legally available to veterinarians and pet owners across the USA.

RPS elects Claire Anderson as President

BRITAIN'S Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has elected Claire Anderson (**pictured**) as its new President, succeeding Sandra Gidley who announced she was stepping aside earlier this year (**PD** 13 Apr).

Anderson was previously Chair of the RPS English Pharmacy Board, and pledged to focus on key priorities including expanding the scope of the Society's influence, implementing change and advancing work already under way around equality, diversity and inclusion.

"I promise to always be equitable in my decision



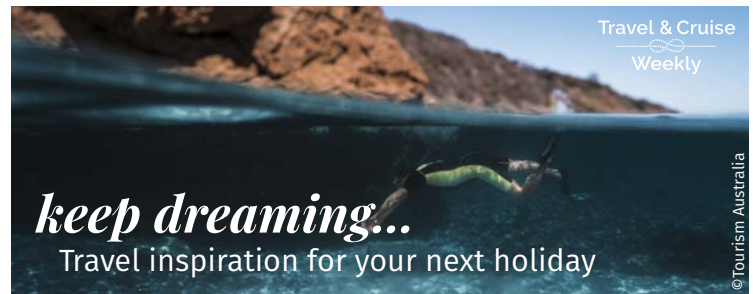
making, to stand alongside all our members and be an ally, to amplify the voice of pharmacy, to advocate for change and to support future generations of pharmacists," she said.



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Monash to investigate aged care role

MONASH University's Centre for Medicine Use and Safety (CMUS) is set to investigate embedding pharmacists in residential aged care facilities, after securing \$2 million through the Medical Research Future Fund.

As part of the project, pharmacists will work as "knowledge brokers" to deliver evidence-based recommendations to boost the safe and effective use of psychotropic medications in people living with dementia, in response to the aged care sector's over-reliance on chemical restraints highlighted in by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Project lead and CMUS Director, Professor Simon Bell, said rates of psychotropic medication used in aged care "remain high, despite an overall lack of evidence for benefits and well-established risks". "New models of evidence-



translation are needed to ensure safe and effective medication management," he said.

"Pharmacist knowledge brokers will work in close partnership with nurses, GPs, residents and their families to provide training in managing changed behaviours and to coordinate education using evidence-based resources.

"If employing pharmacists as knowledge brokers to address evidence-practice gaps proves successful, the model may be

suitable for translating clinical practice guidelines in other therapeutic areas."

The study is set to be conducted over four years in partnership with the University of Queensland, Flinders University and University of Sydney, alongside five aged care providers in Western Australia, Victoria, NSW and Queensland, and specialist aged care pharmacy groups, Gunn & McConville in Victoria, and Aspect Health in Queensland.



BELIEVE it or not, using a kitchen cleanser to whiten your teeth is not actually a great idea.

Apparently one of the latest trends on social media network is using a "Magic Eraser" pad on your teeth, after a user named @theheatherdunn posted a video showing her scrubbing her choppers with a small piece of the white cleanser.

The routine involves avoiding fluoride in favour of coconut oil - based on a tip she cleverly picked up on YouTube - followed by using a "little tiny piece" of Magic Eraser on her teeth.

"Wet it, don't touch your gums," she recommended in the video which has now been viewed millions of times.

Thousands of comments both pro and anti the approach have been posted, while a Texas orthodontist has posted a response noting that a Magic Eraser is actually made of melanine foam.

"It's basically foam that's hard as glass and acts as a really abrasive sandpaper, meaning, yeah, your teeth are white because you scrubbed all the enamel off," he said.

"So in fact, no, don't do this," he suggested.

As well as their abrasive qualities, Magic Erasers contain sodium, sulfurous acid and formaldehyde - not exactly the sort of thing you want to be putting into your mouth.

TikTok has amended the original video to include a warning to viewers that "the action depicted could result in serious injury".

Priceline class action edging closer

AT LEAST 30 current and former Priceline Pharmacy franchisees are expected to lodge a class action claim against Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API) next month, case lead, Stewart Levitt, of Levitt Robinson Solicitors, says.

However, the pharmacy wholesaler, which is subject to an unsolicited non-binding indicative offer from Wesfarmers (PD 12 Jul), has yet to be served, with Levitt and lead plaintiff, Chris Lemon, canvassing potential co-plaintiffs for more than a year (PD 06 May 2020).

The *Australian Financial Review* reported this morning that Levitt plans to lodge the

suit in the Supreme Court of Victoria in Aug, with pharmacy owners seeking to recover benefits lost due to Priceline withholding rebates for failing to use mandated in-store displays.

The publication note that API is pursuing Lemon through a civil action relating to \$2.1 million the company claims it is owned following the sale of two Priceline Pharmacy stores owned by Lemon in 2019.

A spokesperson for Priceline told *Pharmacy Daily*, that "as of today there is still no class action", adding the company "will protect the brand and businesses we have built together".

Armidale winner

NSW community pharmacist Josh Lee from Mountview Pharmacy in Armidale has been named this year's Most Outstanding Community Pharmacist by the Australian Patients Association (APA).

The award aims to recognise the role community pharmacists play in educating patients about medication use, providing basic health checks and ensuring patient continuity of care, especially for the elderly and chronically ill.

Lee was nominated by some of his customers, with APA CEO Stephen Mason saying the organisation recognised the contribution pharmacists make.