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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Scam watch

THE Australasian College of Pharmacy (ACP) is hosting a webinar highlighting the importance of cyber security and its impact on community pharmacy, next Tue evening.

The session will provide pharmacists with the opportunity to hear from cyber security expert and EFTsure Regional Director, William Willcocks, who will discuss the risks facing the pharmacy sector, particularly in the payments area.

ACP CEO, Dr Dimitri Kopanakis, said the threat of cyber attacks was "an ever-growing area of concern for pharmacists and their respective businesses".

"The webinar will help pharmacists to understand and mitigate payment risks," he said.

The session is free for ACP members.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register.

Long-term migration solution needed

LIMITED pathways to permanent residency under current skilled immigration rules are hampering regional and rural pharmacy owners from attracting overseas talent, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Clinical Governance and Workforce Senior Pharmacist, Claire Bekema, believes.

Speaking at a Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee hearing last week, Bekema, said the decision to add community pharmacists to the short-term skilled occupation list "does not really help solve" workforce shortages being experienced in regional and remote locations.

"The pathways to permanent residency are limited, and therefore we're not attracting skilled pharmacists from overseas," she said.

"We really need to be on the medium-to-long-term skilled migration list, and that's what we're advocating for. It's just opening up the options and the attractiveness of Australia for these skilled migrants.

"There is a pipeline issue as well in terms of the professional requirements that they need to go through to be able to practise in Australia.



"The benefits for the employer are seen only one or two years down the track, and because of the temporary nature of the current visas they get value for maybe only one or two years beyond that.

"So we see that the medium-to-long-term strategic skills list is the only option to help us solve this problem."

Guild National President, Trent Twomey, told a webinar last week that the profession needed to build a case to encourage the Federal Government to grant more working visas to overseas pharmacists to tackle workforce shortages (PD 09 Nov).

However, members of the

Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) Activists Group Facebook page have suggested that improvements to pay and working conditions would alleviate the need for owners to source overseas talent.

"If better wages are provided then the majority of pharmacists will start working, then there will be no shortage, less stress and burn out for employees," one of the group's members said in a post responding to Twomey's comments.

"[The] Guild wants to bring more overseas pharmacists, make them script monkeys and exploit them for 5 to 10 years till they realise how they were robbed and exploited."

Your views about biosimilars

Researchers at the University of Newcastle are looking for pharmacists to complete a short survey about their views and experience with biosimilar substitution.

[CLICK HERE](#) to find out more about the survey



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Pharmacy trial lacks evidence: AMA

MEDICAL lobby group, the Australian Medical Association (AMA), is questioning the benefits of funding Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Programs, with similar services already available through general practice.

Responding to an article in *Australian Doctor*, which reported that the Federal Government funded Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Trial, had identified "just 136 cases out of the 14,100 patients screened" at a cost of more than \$8,000 for each patient diagnosed with type-2 diabetes, the AMA said there was a lack of evidence to support continuing to fund the program.

The program, which ran across 340 pharmacies, is currently being assessed by the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), with a view to a broader publicly-funded rollout in the future.

"While the AMA is glad that this pharmacy program is receiving the same level of transparency



and scrutiny as medical services when they are examined through the MSAC process, it is not clear whether this study was peer-reviewed, and full trial results are not publicly available," the AMA said.

"The AMA's submission to MSAC on the trial flagged a number of concerns, noting a lack of evidence for continuing Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Programs when there is already an evidence-based diabetes screening process in place in

general practice.

"The program compared the cost-effectiveness of three pharmacy-based screening models but did not compare these against more readily available and evidence-based medical services in the wider public health context, such as those in general practice."

MEANWHILE, Diabetes Australia will be celebrating the centenary of the discovery of insulin this Sun, as the organisation marks World Diabetes Day.



Dispensary Corner

EVERY part of the global economy is wanting to encourage vaccination - and apparently even the sex industry in Austria is getting involved.

A Vienna brothel has been given the authority to establish itself as an immunisation hub, and is offering a special bonus for anyone who gets a jab.

The FunPalast: Sex Star Sauna Club will give a 30-minute voucher with the "lady of your choice," for any immunisation administered on site between 4pm and 10pm this month.

The brothel's director Christoph Leilacher said "it's actually such a great action to make such a statement, especially in our industry...we have a great vaccination site and we are very popular".

According to *Reuters TV* the FunPalast initiative aims to boost vaccination rates above the current 64% of the population double jabbed, in the lead-up to new restrictions which will require a vaccine passport for patrons visiting theatres, restaurants, hairdressers and brothels from the start of next month.

Although the pandemic has impacted the sauna club's patronage through the pandemic, it's hoped the special promotion will give the brothel a happy ending after the last 20 months of pain.



Pharmacy sidelined over COVAX errors

HEALTH authorities in Virginia, US, have withdrawn a pharmacy from the State's COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) program over concerns 112 children may have been given incorrect doses.

Loudon County Health Department Director, Dr David Goodfriend told *CNBC* that staff at the pharmacy had administered doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine from vials intended for patients 12 years and older, when administering shots to children aged between five and 11 years.

Goodfriend noted that the pharmacy's staff had "attempted

to provide a proper [10 microgram] dose", however he said there was a possibility that a lower than recommended dose had been administered, because the doses were drawn from adult vials, rather than new orange-capped vials with specific instructions and dilution warnings.

Parents of the affected children have been advised that they can either complete the second shot with the proper 10 microgram dose as scheduled, or wait 21 days after the incorrect dose was administered to restart the immunisation process.

Cannabis update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will host webinars on 22 and 23 Nov outlining changes to the Special Access Scheme (SAS) and Authorised Prescriber applications for medicinal cannabis products.

As of 22 Nov, SAS and Authorised Prescriber applications for unapproved medicinal cannabis products will be made by active ingredient under a category based on cannabinoid content, rather than by trade name.

CLICK HERE to register to attend the webinars.



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