

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

Get it right: PDL

PROFESSIONAL indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) is urging pharmacist immunisers to take steps to minimise their risk of error when administering COVID-19 vaccines.

In an alert issued yesterday, PDL said pharmacy owners needed to make sure sufficient resources are available to allow vaccinators time to provide the shots professionally and safely.

PDL noted that with many pharmacies offering both the Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines, pharmacists need to ensure they are providing the right vaccine to the right patient, within the age specifications for the vaccine and at the right interval.

Twomey warns of RC in COVAX waste

COMMUNITY pharmacy owners are being warned not to expose the profession to criticism by allowing large quantities of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX) to expire in their fridges.

Delivering an update on the COVAX rollout last night, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, urged the profession to return stock to the Commonwealth Government before its expiry date.

"We have a lot of excess stock in the network," he said.

"And whilst there are no financial penalties for you, if the stock expires in your fridge, it doesn't look good for us as a profession if a lot of this stock is going out of date."

"I really need you to do your profession a 'solid', I need you to call the vaccine operations centre on that 1800-number and you need to request for your excess AstraZeneca or your excess Moderna stock to be collected."

"Please return the stock, because



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there will be an audit of this, there will be a postmortem.

"There's probably going to be a Royal Commission (RC), and I don't want community pharmacy to open itself up to criticism, as other areas of primary healthcare will - I don't worry about them, I'm not their president - but I don't want us to be opened up to criticism that we had a lot of stock expiring in our fridges."

Under current arrangements the Commonwealth has said it will only collect unused stock if the pharmacy is returning at least 20 vials of the AstraZeneca, or 10 vials of the Moderna vaccine from individual pharmacies.

MEANWHILE, Twomey noted that a number of pharmacies have experienced issues when receiving stock of the Moderna vaccine that had been defrosted up to 10 days before it was delivered, giving them less than three weeks before the stock expires.

"The Guild has been advocating and agitating on your behalf,"



Twomey said.

"We have been able to reach an agreement where remote pharmacies to start with - and I'm hoping we can roll this out to all pharmacies in Australia - will begin to receive their stock frozen."

"If the Moderna stock lands at your pharmacy frozen, of course you'll remember from your training that if you pop that in your vaccine accredited fridge, which is at 2 to 8°C, your 30 days then ticks over 12 hours later."

Wizard Pharmacy seals deal with AANT

AUTOMOBILE Association of the Northern Territory (AANT) members will be able to save 5% on in-store and online purchases - excluding Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme prescriptions - as part of a deal with Wizard Pharmacy.

The new partnership has been sealed ahead of the opening of the Western Australia-based group's first store in the NT, at Darwin's Casuarina Square

Shopping Centre in Dec.

Wizard Chief Operating Officer, Sally Parker, welcomed the opportunity to work with one of the NT's most trusted brands.

"We share a common purpose which is to enhance the quality of life for all Territorians," she said.

"We are excited about the opportunity our partnership represents to deliver greater value to all Territorians."




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Sigma to roll out new booking system

SIGMA Healthcare is set to roll out Healthengine's patient appointment management system (PAMS) across its five pharmacy brands, under a new partnership announced this morning.

Franchises under the Amcal and Guardian Pharmacy banners will be the first to launch the PAMS to take bookings for AstraZeneca and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, as well as appointments for a range of other health services, with Discount Drug Store, PharmaSave and WholeLife pharmacies to be given access to the system in the coming months.

Through the system Sigma-branded stores are set to gain exposure to Healthengine's 4.3 million users.

Welcoming the new deal, Amcal and Guardian Head, Kurt O'Brien, described the Healthengine service as "best-in-class".

"Via this new and exciting partnership, we are delighted to offer our retail partners best-in-class scheduling and appointment management systems to help our busy teams make the most of their days – and deliver strengthened customer value," he said.

"Despite the turbulence and disruptions caused by the COVID-19



pandemic, Amcal and Guardian, alongside our parent network and brand peers, have remained steadfast in our efforts to provide expert advice and superior healthcare support to all Australians.

"This partnership materialises this ambition, again – by continually improving and refining our healthcare offering while building upon the success of our already existing in-store services available at Amcal and Guardian pharmacies, nationwide."

Healthengine CEO, Dr Marcus Tan, said the PAMS would provide pharmacists with access to the latest digital health technology to support online bookings, scheduling and voucher management.

"We are pleased to support the pharmacy sector adapt to the fast moving and evolving COVID-19 vaccination rollout with a robust technology solution that works for a single store but also an enterprise grade solution for a leading group like Sigma Healthcare," he said.

"Building on our background of supporting healthcare providers including GPs, dentists, allied health practitioners and specialists, bringing Sigma's extensive network of community pharmacies to PAMS and Healthengine's marketplace will further support the consumer's healthcare journey and help provide more access points to assist with Australia's COVID-19 vaccination effort."

Pharmacists' mental health

MENTAL Health Foundation Australia will host a free online Pharmacists' Mental Health Symposium on Mon 25 Oct.

Noting that visiting a pharmacy and consulting with a pharmacist are often the first steps patients take when seeking medical assistance, the two-hour-long event will focus on pharmacists' mental health, so they are better placed "to make a meaningful difference", in Australia's post-pandemic recovery.

CLICK HERE to register.

Vapespot fined

A MELBOURNE-BASED individual is facing fines totalling \$18,648 over alleged breaches of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*, relating to advertising of nicotine vaping products (NVPs) on the Vapespot website.

The TGA reported that the site had been promoting nicotine pods containing a Schedule 4 medicine.

Medlab sells Aussie nutraceuticals biz

AUSTRALIAN-OWNED healthcare supplements company, PharmaCare, has acquired the local arm of Medlab's 'Practitioner-Only' nutraceuticals business.

The deal, which is effective from 01 Nov, will see PharmaCare add 29 products to its range of health and wellness brands, which includes Nature's Way and Bioglan.

Medlab CEO, Sean Hall, said the "change in ownership makes sense for the full supply chain, as PharmaCare has full pharmacy and allied health infrastructure, capability and great customer service."

"We are confident that PharmaCare will continue to develop the relationships with utmost devotion and industry knowledge," he said.

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Lower 'white coat effect' boosts COVAX

COMMUNITY pharmacies are playing a key role in the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX), with the approachability of pharmacists heralded as a possible factor in getting hesitant patients immunised.

Pharmacy Platform's Programs and Services Manager, Krysti-Lee Rigby, noted that the reduced 'white coat effect' experienced by patients in pharmacy settings could be a factor in boosting the uptake of vaccines through the community pharmacy network.

"The 'white coat effect' gets its name from doctors and medical staff who wear white coats in clinical settings that can trigger anxiety levels that clinically raise blood pressure," she said.

"While we know that higher levels of COVID-19 circulating in the community, particularly in NSW, has contributed to accelerated vaccine uptake, we also think access to approachable pharmacists has played a role.

"You don't need to make an appointment to chat with your



pharmacist, so it can feel less daunting approaching your local pharmacist for a chat if you have questions or concerns about available vaccines.

"Customers can start with a chat and then go away and think about their options without feeling pressured."

Rigby added that the convenience of the pharmacy network was another factor behind the success of the vaccination campaign.

"Pharmacists are capable of doing so much more than filling scripts

and advising on the best shampoo to treat hair lice," she said.

"They're highly skilled health providers with deep knowledge and expertise – the pandemic is illuminating that.

"Pharmacies also allow walk-ins, which works well for spontaneous millennials or those who've experienced difficulty trying to book online or call a hotline.

"There's a huge convenience factor for shift workers as most pharmacies are open for late trade seven days per week."



Dispensary Corner

FAR from delivering another baby-boom it appears that COVID-19-induced lockdowns have turned out to be a bit of a mood killer.

While some had hypothesised that couples having more time together would lead to a spike in the global birth rate, researchers from Texas State University and the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, found sexual desire is lower than it has been at any point during the pandemic.

Assistant Professor of Psychology at Texas State, Rhonda Balzarini, told *The Wall Street Journal*, that people were "feeling really schlubby" after ditching exercise routines and forgoing personal grooming.

"It's like a stress spillover," Balzarini said.

"That makes them feel less attractive and therefore less desirable."

Psychologist at Northwestern University's Family Institute, Alexandra Solomon, noted that people needed to find ways to block out inner perceptions of their attractiveness and to borrow Nike's slogan, 'just do it'.

"Your partner very likely does not have the same critical narrative about your body that you do," Solomon said.



Win with Cheeki

Cheeki and Pharmacy Daily are this week giving away a 350 mL insulated coffee mug each day.

Cheeki's insulated coffee mugs are 100% leakproof, easy to clean and keep coffee seriously hot for up to 8 hours which makes them ideal for the coffee lovers who like to sip on-the-go.

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TGA takes action

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has commenced proceedings against Enviro Tech Holdings Pty Ltd and its executive officers, Connie and Jerry Triantos, over alleged unlawful importation of surgical masks.

The company had been issued with a \$13,320 infringement notice over the alleged breach of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*, in Dec 2020.

However, the company did not pay, prompting the TGA to take the matter to the Federal Court.