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Today's issue of PD

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

- Packapill
- Sigma Healthcare

Eastern delivery

PHARMACY delivery service, Packapill, is expanding to support pharmacies in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Packapill offers delivery to consumers within three hours. See **page four** for more.

Indigenous focus

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Community Pharmacies for Rural and Indigenous Australia Subcommittee, will host an Indigenous Health Programs webinar tonight.

CLICK HERE for more.

Pharmacies get Pfizer booster role

COMMUNITY pharmacies are set to receive stock of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (Comirnaty), to support a national booster campaign, Federal Health Minister, Greg Hunt, revealed this morning.

The announcement that pharmacies will be allocated supplies of the vaccine follow the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) approval of booster doses of Comirnaty for individuals aged 18 years and over, at least six months after they received their second COVID-19 vaccine jab.

"This is an important step, and it will mean that Australia will be one of the most highly vaccinated societies in the world, one of the most recently vaccinated communities in the world, and one of the first to receive a whole of population booster program," Hunt said.

"This is about additional protection - you remain fully



vaccinated with two doses.

"The next step is that the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) will provide final advice... but subject to that ATAGI advice we intend to commence the general population booster program no later than 08 Nov.

"We have the supplies, we have the distribution mechanisms, we'll just work with the states, the GPs, the pharmacies, the Commonwealth vaccination clinics and the Indigenous vaccination

clinics to ensure that everything is in place."

Hunt confirmed that the Government planned to start rolling out booster doses to the aged care and disability sectors as a priority.

While further advice on the use of boosters has yet to be issued by ATAGI, the TGA noted that the product information for Comirnaty "now includes a statement that a third dose may be given to severely immunocompromised people aged 12 years and over at least 28 days after the second dose".

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PSA calls for pharmacy RAT funding

ACCESS to medicines could be severely hampered if Federal, State and Territory governments fail to provide funding for rapid antigen tests (RATs) for community pharmacy staff, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, noted that while many governments were using RATs to test MPs and parliamentary staff, they were yet to utilise them to protect health workers including pharmacists.

With NSW and Victoria emerging from lockdowns, Freeman said rolling out RATs for pharmacy staff would be essential to ensure pharmacies remain open to provide access to medications for patients.

"Whilst it is pleasing to see that some antigen tests have been supplied in Australia, it is time for these tests to be utilised more broadly across our health system, including in pharmacies," he said.

"With jurisdictions reopening, it's likely we will continue to see a large number of pharmacies identified as exposure sites.

"Staff will still have to isolate and stores may have to temporarily close until PCR results are returned



and deep cleaning has concluded.

"Rapid antigen tests expedite this process, returning results within 15 minutes.

"During such closures, patients would need to source their medicines from elsewhere – and whilst this may be an inconvenience for those living in metropolitan areas, it would have significant implications on rural and remote communities.

"We cannot have a situation where Australians are cut off from the medication that they need, and antigen testing is one of the keys to ensuring continuity of healthcare and access to essential medicines.

"Professional football teams, schools, abattoirs and various other industries are already utilising this technology.

"In the meantime, our pharmacists and pharmacy staff are in the firing line, putting themselves at risk on a daily basis as they continue to provide their communities with access to medicines and health services.

"It is the responsibility of governments to protect our healthcare workers and right now they are failing our pharmacists.

"It's time to protect our frontline health workers by providing rapid antigen tests for pharmacists."

Sigma CFO quits

SIGMA Healthcare has announced that Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Jackie Pearson, has resigned from the position, after 13 months in the role (*PD* 30 Sep 2020).

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) the company revealed that Pearson had tendered her resignation, "providing six months' notice in accordance with the terms of her employment contract".

Sigma Chair, Ray Gunston, said, "it is disappointing to lose someone of the calibre of Jackie", who joined the company in 2005, leading several major programs including the company's 'Project Pivot', and the transition of its contract with Chemist Warehouse.

"During her time at Sigma, Jackie has made significant contributions, especially over the last five years where she has led business critical transformation programs," Gunston said.

"We wish Jackie well in her next endeavours."

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SHPA welcomes net zero commitment

MOVES by the Federal Government to cut Australia's carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 are being welcomed by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

The organisation's CEO, Kristen Michaels, flagged concerns over the impact climate change has had on healthcare services across the country.

"Hospital pharmacists nationwide are concerned that inaction on climate change and warming of the planet will contribute to negative health outcomes of Australians – particularly the most vulnerable – increasing hospitalisations due to extreme weather events such as bushfires, and fostering the spread of infectious diseases," she said.

"Our members in regional and rural Australia have long been concerned about logistical difficulties with cold-chain supply chains to areas of Australia with extreme heat.

"Temperature breaches are sadly accepted as inevitable, which often results in costly waste of cold-chain medicines such as insulins and vaccines.

"Global warming will further exacerbate the difficulties in delivering vital medicines, that are intact and safe to use, to all parts of Australia."

Michaels added that hospital pharmacists could play a crucial role in reducing healthcare emissions, which account for 7% of Australia's carbon output, by supporting better prescribing and deprescribing practices.



Dispensary Corner

EATING fruit is important, but this is probably an extreme way to make sure you get enough.

A US woman is suing Kellogg's for US\$5 million over claims that the company's Whole Grain Frosted Strawberry Pop-Tarts don't contain enough strawberries.

Court documents accuse Kellogg's of misleading and deceptive conduct, because the toaster pastries also contain pears and apples, in a violation of consumer protection laws.

The New York-based plaintiff claimed she would have not bought the product had she known the shocking truth.

FORGET melatonin or zolpidem - a new tourist offering in Hong Kong offers a unique alternative for people having difficulty falling asleep.

A company called Ulu Tours recently expanded its range of coach operations to include a five hour, 70km ride to nowhere.

Spokesman Kenneth Kong told the *Associated Press* he came up with the idea after seeing a social media post from a mega-stressed buddy who said he was unable to sleep at night, but always dozed off on his daily bus rides.

"His post inspired us to create this tour that lets passengers just sleep on the bus," Kong said.

Ticket prices range from HK\$13 to HK\$51 per person depending on where they sit on the vehicle, while passengers are also provided with a complimentary eye mask and earplugs.

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au

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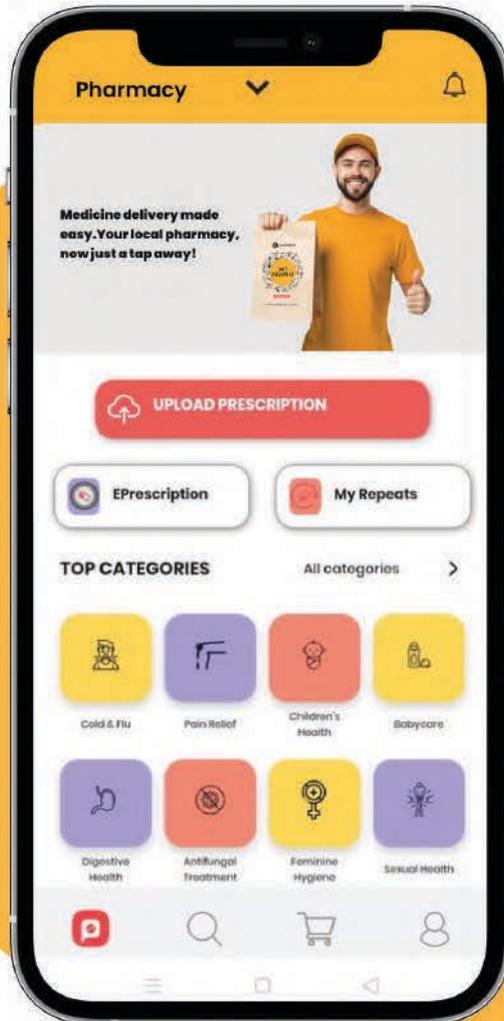
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