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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus a full page from **Wizard Pharmacy Services**.

Connect again

PHARMACY Connect will return to Sydney this Sep after being cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19.

The event will be hosted by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia at Sydney CBD's Hilton Hotel from 01 to 03 Sep.

Former Guild National President, Kos Sclavos, said planning for the event was well underway, with earlybird registration now open.

The event will be covered by a 100% refund guarantee to ensure those who cannot attend due to COVID-19 restrictions will be able to transfer their registration or get a full refund.

CLICK HERE to register.

Vic to cut flu vax limits

VICTORIA is expected to launch a consultation process with the view to permanently lowering the minimum age of patients who can receive influenza vaccines from pharmacist immunisers.

If approved the State Government would authorise pharmacists to administer flu shots to children aged five years and older, in line with current rules for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

Welcoming the plans to lower the current age limit, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily* that Victoria should implement a temporary emergency order, similar to the measure that has been implemented in Queensland (**PD** 06 Apr), to bolster access to flu vaccines this winter.

"The Guild strongly believes that there should also be a temporary emergency approval to allow it to happen now," he said.

"As they say in Game of Thrones, 'winter is coming', and there's no



reason pharmacist immunisers should not be administering flu vaccines to children aged five years and older.

"All States and Territories need to help protect their communities and this measure just makes sense."

Tassone said that while the Government had indicated the consultation process would get underway "imminently", he was "not sure how long it would take". "We're calling for it to be expedited," he said.

Victorian Shadow Health Minister, Georgie Crozier, has previously called on the State Government to explain "why community pharmacists are unable to vaccinate children with the flu vaccination when they are allowed to vaccinate these same children with COVID vaccinations".

Tassone noted that Victorian pharmacist immunisers have already safely administered more than 55,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to children aged between five and 11 years.

Wizard magic

WIZARD Pharmacy is aiming to help owners get the most out of their stores while delivering better care for patients.

See **page five** for more information about the Wizard group.

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AMH AUSTRALIAN MEDICINE HANDBOOK

Self-care focus needed: CHP

AUSTRALIA'S health system needs greater investment in evidence-based solutions that raise health literacy, and promote self-care, Consumer Healthcare Products (CHP) Australia, says.

Outlining the lobby group's priorities ahead of the Federal Election, CHP CEO, Dr Deon Schoombie, said "empowering individuals to take greater responsibility for their health management and outcomes should be a defining characteristic of Australia's health and care systems, services and supports".

He added the CHP would "gladly" offer its public endorsement of policies that advance responsible self-care for health and support the consumer healthcare industry going forward.

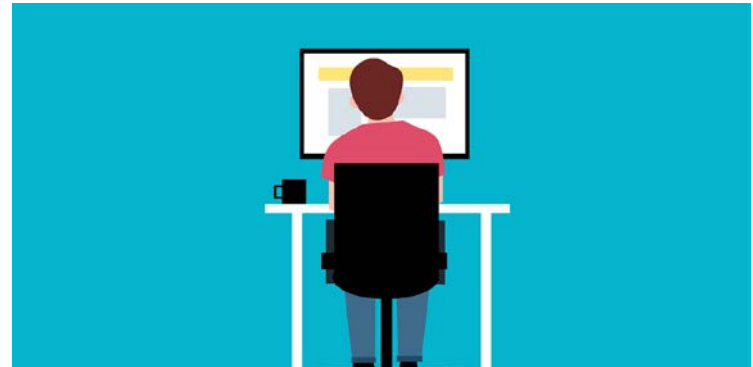
Priceline to use Healthengine's PAMS

PHARMACY wholesaler, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API) will roll out Healthengine's online Patient Appointment Management System (PAMS) across its Priceline Pharmacy network under a new partnership between the two companies.

API General Manager of Healthcare Services, Rob Tassie, said the new system would strengthen the user experience for pharmacy staff and consumers when booking appointments online.

"The technical capability offered through Healthengine's PAMS means that customers can easily and conveniently access our total range of health and beauty services while providing our pharmacies with a more integrated and simple operating system," he said.

Healthengine CEO, Dr Marcus Tan, said that over the coming month Priceline stores will be added to the company's directory of



healthcare providers enabling them to offer appointments through its marketplace, giving them exposure to its 4.3 million users.

"Teaming up with API, allows us to help integrate a robust technology solution into its leading network of pharmacies to support pharmacy teams with the digital capabilities they need to strengthen the customer experience as well as efficiently run their consultation rooms and

various health services, especially with the evolving COVID-19 rollout and the intersection with flu season," he said.

"PAMS provides powerful functionality geared to support the range of community pharmacies from SME to enterprises like API.

"Healthengine will continue to work with leaders in the pharmacy sector to build out and evolve PAMS as the pharmacy world evolves."

Workforce issue must be addressed

POLITICAL announcements about healthcare policies are meaningless if they do not address workforce shortages, the Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) believes.

APHA CEO, Michael Roff, said staffing issues were the biggest challenge facing the Australian health sector at the moment, with neither of the major parties putting forward a plan to tackle the ongoing workforce shortages.

"We are facing large backlogs in essential surgery across both public and private hospitals, and without skilled migration to address the immediate shortage, Australians will be forced to wait longer, with ever decreasing quality of life, to get the surgery they need," he said.

"To address longer term issues Australia must have a National Health Workforce Plan and we call on both major parties to commit to develop such a plan."

Reform vital for boosting rural health

THE National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) is calling on all political parties to commit to "bold health system change" to deliver equitable outcomes for rural and remote patients.

Outlining its priorities ahead of the Federal Election, NRHA CEO, Dr Gabrielle O'Kane, said significant changes were required to deliver "high-quality, affordable healthcare services, and give rural health consumers the opportunity for equitable

health outcomes".

O'Kane said the group had endorsed a primary care model called, Rural Area Community Controlled Health Organisation (RACCHO), to support recruitment and retention of health professionals.

The group is calling for the next Federal Government to fund and rollout 30 RACCHOs across the country, to improve access to affordable high-quality care, where it is needed.

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Suicide prevention training rollout

PHARMACY staff in Queensland are being invited to participate in a free suicide prevention training program, hosted by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Queensland Branch.

The Guild will run two workshops - the full day Stronger Smarter Yarns for life program, and the evening Conversations for Life session - in Gladstone, Woorabinda, Rockhampton, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Gympie, between 24 May and 02 Jun.

Following recent flooding events and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Guild's Queensland Branch President, Chris Owen, said the training would help pharmacy staff to engage with people at risk for early intervention.

"Sadly suicide rates are more than twice as high in young Indigenous Australians compared to non-Indigenous Australians," Owen said.

"The training will support participants to have conversations with people in the community who



may be at risk.

"By educating and upskilling Queenslanders in early suicide prevention, we hope to increase the confidence of community members and pharmacy staff so they can engage in conversations with people at risk for early intervention.

"There are only 15 spots available for each course and limited places remain.

"Now is the time to take action if you've ever wanted to join training around early conversations, building community connections

and social inclusion

"Community pharmacies are highly accessible with 97% of consumers living within 2.5km of their local community pharmacy, and 66% in regional areas.

"Pharmacies are also the most frequently visited health destinations and staff are well placed for significant interactions with members of the public.

"The program will also highlight referral pathways to locally-led suicide prevention services to support practical and ongoing community collaboration."

Walgreens faces opioid lawsuit

US PHARMACY chain, Walgreens, is facing allegations of "flooding" Florida with opioids between 1999 and 2020.

The Sunshine State is suing the group for failing to do its due diligence in dispensing opioid prescriptions, and not directing patients away from the highly addictive analgesics.

"Walgreens was the last line of defense in preventing improper distribution of opioids," a lawyer acting on behalf of the State said.

"It was the entity that actually put the opioids in the hands of people addicted to opioids and the hands of criminals."

However, the company's defence attorney said responsibility for the State's opioid crisis lay at the feet of doctors who "have written so many scripts for pain medicine".

Guardian launches interactive guide

PHARMACY group, Guardian, has launched its new Healthy Kids' Guide with an interactive online series.

Hosted by pharmacist, Jessica Burrows, the guide aims to help parents to identify common ailments in children, as well as providing practical advice on children's day-to-day wellbeing.

Guardian Head, Kurt O'Brien, said the guide was launched in support of the Vinnies' Back to School campaign, which provides disadvantaged children with essential items such as learning materials, uniforms, and food to support good nutrition.

"The Healthy Kids' Guide Series has always embodied Guardian's ambition to look after its communities and provide opportunities for better patient outcomes for more than 20 years," he said.

"The new online format takes an already successful Guardian program into the digital sphere, evolving to our customers' needs, whilst providing greater opportunities for our franchise partners to engage with customers in new ways."

CLICK HERE to access the online series, which covers sun safety, asthma, eczema and more.

NACCHO names scholarship recipients

FIVE pharmacy students will receive funding from the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Pharmacist Scholarship program.

Having initially been established to support two applicants, NACCHO expanded the program due to the high quality and number of candidate seeking support, NACCHO CEO, Dr Dawn Casey said.

"NACCHO was impressed with the calibre and volume of applicants we received, especially in this first year of the

scholarship's implementation," she said.

"We are proud to provide opportunities that help build leadership and skills amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals, who are significantly underrepresented in the pharmacy profession."

The five scholarship recipients are:

- Jai-ann Eastaughffe, Queensland
- Louis Emery, Queensland
- Jason Colemand, South Australia
- Bryony Forrest, Victoria
- James Sowter, Victoria.

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Special Easter issue



Dispensary Corner

A STAND-UP political stoush is brewing in Brazil over erectile dysfunction medication, with opponents of President Jair Bolsonaro asking why the country's military is buying tens of thousands of Viagra tablets.

The "seemingly unorthodox acquisitions" were highlighted in local media earlier this week, with opposition spokesman Elias Vaz saying "we must understand why the Bolsonaro administration is spending public money on buying such large quantities of Viagra".

Officials within the Brazilian Navy and Air Force confirmed the purchase of more than 30,000 pills, but said the drug was being used to treat pulmonary hypertension - in contrast to an *O Globo* newspaper report that Bolsonaro was attempting to harden up the country's defence forces.

The issue was described by Rio representative Marcelo Freixo as an "erectile outrage".

"The Bolsonaro administration dallied over buying COVID vaccines but approved the overpriced purchase of 35,000 Viagra pills for the armed forces," he said on social media.

Other parties described the drug acquisition as a "criminal spending spree," while rival Presidential candidate Ciro Gomes said "unless they're able to prove they're developing some kind of secret weapon - capable of revolutionising the international arms industry - it'll be tough to justify the purchase of 35,000 units of an erectile dysfunction drug".

Fraudster pharmacist struck off in UK

BRITISH pharmacist, Peter Saad, has been booted out of the profession after using his registration status to commit multiple acts of fraud to cover his gambling debts.

The General Pharmaceutical Council's fitness-to-practise committee heard Saad conned a member of his church to give him more than \$900,000.

Saad initially convinced his fellow parishioner to lend him money to cover loan repayments on his father's home, which he said he had used to purchase a pharmacy in the US, *Chemist and Druggist* reported.

He then told the individual he had been diagnosed with potentially terminal testicular cancer, and swindled money to fund private treatment "including an operation

and chemotherapy".

Saad then talked his victim into investing in a fictitious pharmaceutical warehouse, producing fake invoices for work to the building, which the backer eventually realised were falsified.

The pharmacist then confessed to seeking to land funds to cover his gambling debts.

Saad told the Council that "his fitness to practise was not currently impaired" despite his convictions, adding that he had received treatment and recovered from the "gambling addiction which effectively took over his life".

He said that he never used his profession to gain funds, insisting his fraudulent actions were conducted as "a business entrepreneur", rather than as a pharmacist.



Despite Saad's protestations, the Council ruled that he had used his professional status to repeatedly fraudulently obtain money, and ordered that he be removed from the register.

Saad was previously convicted on fraud charges relating to the same action, and sentenced to 21 months imprisonment at Liverpool Crown Court.

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