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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news plus a full page from **Good Price Pharmacy Warehouse**.

Good Price seeks franchisees

GOOD Price Pharmacy Warehouse is today highlighting its multiple business models as the "partner to take your business to the next level" - see **page four** for details.

FIP flu handbook

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has released a new handbook for pharmacists to help patients manage the symptoms of cold, flu and sinusitis and support self-care.

It's available as a free download from fip.org.

SA Premier seeks missing RAT inquiry

SOUTH Australian Premier, Steven Marshall, is calling for an inquiry into claims that supplies of COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits bound for retailers in the State have been claimed by interstate Governments.

Speaking to Adelaide radio station, *FIVEaa*, this morning Marshall said he would write to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) today about the issue.

"South Australians have every right to be outraged if these allegations are correct, he said.

"Any interference in the supply of RATs for SA is completely and utterly unacceptable.

"We contacted governments interstate, they certainly don't accept that they have jumped the queue but we think there needs to be an independent investigation."

Marshall said the ACCC was the appropriate body to review the allegations.

The Premier's comments

followed a report in Adelaide's *The Advertiser* stating that "hundreds of thousands of RATs bound for South Australia have gone missing, with interstate governments accused of requisitioning them" before they could be shipped to the State.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia South Australian Branch President, Nick Panayiaris, told the paper that pharmacies were seeing orders for the tests disappear.

"One outlet had a \$480,000 RAT confirmed order put off today," he said.

"These disappearing orders are 'appearing' at Government media conferences [around the country] each day as 'Oh, we have just received one million RATs'.

"One supplier I talked to today has lost three flights entirely full of RATs.

"One supplier said entire planeloads are being bought so that governments are not seen to be requisitioning [supplies] from individual suppliers."



Panayiaris added that pharmacies in the State have been inundated with calls about RATs, with a number of stores "having to take their phones off the hook to provide basic services like dispensing".

The Advertiser also quoted a letter sent to a South Australian retailer by a Sydney-based wholesaler stating an order worth \$1.3 million had been seized.

"It wasn't that we were ignoring you, it was a matter of the Government taking all our focus and commandeering our stock that arrived since we put out the offer to you re RAT kits," the wholesaler said.

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PPA concerned by COVID PoC testing

UNION group, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA), is concerned moves to enable community pharmacies to provide point-of-care (PoC) COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs) could increase employee pharmacists' risk of contracting the virus.

Responding to updated advice on PoC tests issued by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) last week, which paved the way for pharmacists to perform or supervise testing, PPA CEO, Jill McCabe, warned testing in pharmacies could expose staff and customers to COVID-19.

"Employee pharmacists have been blindsided by the TGA's decision, which clears the way for rapid antigen PoC testing for coronavirus, including screening for members of the general public, to be conducted

in community pharmacies," she said.

"Although the TGA has approved this form of testing, it has acknowledged the serious risk this poses to pharmacy staff and the wider community, stating on its website that people with symptoms or who are potentially infectious are 'strongly advised' not to visit their local pharmacy due to the risk of infecting others.

"Unlike dedicated COVID-19 testing centres with trained staff wearing full PPE, strict mask and other health and safety protocols, we don't believe community pharmacies are adequately designed or equipped to take on testing for COVID-19.

"This poses too great a risk to staff in community pharmacies and to people seeking health care through their pharmacy.

"We are very concerned by this decision, which was made without proper consultation, and urge the TGA to reconsider."

Meanwhile, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has previously backed the approval of PoC testing in pharmacies, with guidelines issued in Oct 2021 stating that pharmacies wishing to provide the service would "need to consider all aspects associated with providing a testing service including policies and procedures relating to personal protective equipment and infection control, staff training, resources, and costs".

"The consideration of risks and implications of infection of their staff and other consumers including impacts on the continuity of access to medicines is particularly important," the Guild said.

TGA swamped

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has posted a tweet this morning reporting that it is receiving high volumes of enquiries regarding COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs).

The regulator noted that it was unable to provide information about how to access RATs, or what people who test positive for the virus should do.

However, the TGA has published a webpage providing links to relevant information about RATs, the vaccination rollout, travel and restrictions.

CLICK HERE to access the webpage, which includes contact details for people seeking COVID-19 information.

Vic isolation exemptions exclude PAs

PHARMACY assistants (PAs) are not included amongst the list of essential workers that the Victorian State Government has exempted from COVID-19 isolation requirements.

The exemptions announced by the State Government came after National Cabinet gave the green-light for healthcare workers who are deemed to be close contacts of a person with COVID-19, to be exempted from quarantining, if they are asymptomatic and have tested negative for the virus.

Under the current arrangements the exemption extends to "a registered pharmacist, a dispensary assistant or technician at a pharmacy; or someone directly carrying out or supervising the delivery of vaccination services at a pharmacy", meaning front-of-shop workers who are close contacts, but COVID-negative, will still be required to isolate for seven days.

In a message to pharmacy owners, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, said the organisation was "advocating



to the Victorian Government and Department of Health for the exemption to apply to all pharmacy workers".

Speaking on *Australia Today* yesterday, Tassone had highlighted the important role PAs have in keeping pharmacies open (*PD* 18 Jan).

"It's not just pharmacists that need to be included in that exemption," he said.

"It's the vitally important PAs that help support us to keep the doors open, to get the medications to the patients.

"Without our PAs the operation doesn't work, so the Victorian Government and any Government that hasn't put in place these measures from National Cabinet, they need to get their act together."

Novavax approval imminent: Frewen

AUSTRALIA'S COVID-19 taskforce chief, Lieutenant General John Frewen, told *4BC* that the Novavax vaccine is expected to be granted approval imminently.

Frewen said the Federal Government was ready to commence distribution of the vaccine once the Therapeutic Goods Administration gives it

the green-light.

He estimated that 1 to 2% of the population has been "holding out for Novavax", noting that "if anyone has decided that's what they want to wait for, they'll be able to get it as quickly as they can".

Frewen did not specify whether the vaccine would be distributed through pharmacies.

\$50 VOUCHER GIVEAWAY

Every day this week, Deep Heat & Pharmacy Daily will give away a **\$50 Voucher** to celebrate the launch of **NEW Deep Heat Sensocream!**



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Dispensary Corner

AMOROUS lovers in Mississippi looking for something to spice up their lives will be able to turn to Waveland Pharmacy in Hancock County, for some adult gift ideas for Valentine's Day.

The family owned pharmacy, which dispenses ice-cream, contraceptives, COVID-19 rapid antigen tests and New Orleans's Mardi Gras favourite, Dong Phoug king cake, has added a range of sex toys to its inventory.

Highlighting its new range of vibrating massage toys and lubricants in a post on Facebook last week the pharmacy urged shoppers to "come and get your special someone today! Or just something to add a little spice in your life".

The post has attracted positive feedback from followers with one woman describing the store as "a one-stop-shop... COVID tests, king cake, and a vibrator!"

Another intrigued prospective client said, "this must be creating a buzz", with the pharmacy responding that, "it's natural and can be a lot of fun for those whose sex life isn't that grand anymore".

While the sex toys may excite some, a pharmacy with RATs in stock would thrill many Aussies.



HEALTH & BEAUTY

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