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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus a front cover page from Johnson & Johnson.

Tylenol in stock

SPIKES in COVID-19 cases across the country has seen stock shortages of a number of analgesic brands and formulations.

However, Johnson & Johnson has confirmed supplies of its Tylenol paracetamol ranges are available through all major pharmacy wholesalers.

See **cover page** for more.

TGA RAT warning

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is working with the Australian Federal Police to investigate fake documentation used to illegally import unapproved COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs).

The TGA has stressed that no exemptions have been granted to allow the importation or supply of unapproved RATs.

Government is failing pharmacy: PPA

PHARMACISTS are at breaking point due to shortages of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RATs) and vaccinations, union group, Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) reports.

Union CEO, Jill McCabe, hit out at the Federal Government's failure to ensure pharmacies have access to supplies of RATs ahead of the rollout of free tests to concession cardholders, which commenced on Mon.

She also called on the Government to boost supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to pharmacists, noting shortages were pushing the profession to its limits.

"Australia's community pharmacists can't do their job properly or safely without sufficient supplies of RATs and personal protective clothing," she said.

"Pharmacists urgently require supplies of adequate PPE for the safe administration of vaccines.

"However, 25% of respondents to our survey indicated they were having to provide their own PPE.

"Yet again the Federal Government has failed to adequately plan and organise the supply of essential equipment to



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prevent the spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant of COVID-19."

PPA President, Dr Geoff March, described the Government's approach to its free RAT rollout as "reckless and negligent".

"The Federal Government's announcement relied on pharmacies sourcing the RAT tests themselves, but a recent survey found that over 93% of pharmacists have reported major difficulties accessing any supplies at all," he said.

"The shortages are taking a major toll on pharmacists themselves, with over 75% of

pharmacists also reporting that the shortage of RAT tests had a 'significant' or 'extreme' impact on their ability to do their work."

MEANWHILE, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, has previously taken aim at Primary Health Networks (PHNs) for failing to deliver PPE to pharmacies participating in the COVID-19 vaccination rollout (**PD** 12 Jan).

In an interview with *Sky News*, Twomey noted that the pharmacy network was "just as critical as the GP network" to the vaccination effort and needed to be given appropriate PPE supplies.

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NAPSA launches first student journal

THE National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) has launched what is believed to be the world's first peer-reviewed pharmacy student journal - *Australian Pharmacy Students' Journal (APSJ)* - this week.

The publication of the premier edition of the journal comes on the back of more than four years of work by successive NAPSA

Executives in partnership with the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.

The publication aims to promote the importance and strengthen the quality of student-led research in the pharmacy industry.

It also seeks to provide opportunities for students and early career pharmacists to gain skills and experience in academic publishing.



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First Nations focus for CDU course

CHARLES Darwin University is planning to reintroduce pharmacist training to the Northern Territory next year with a new graduate entry extended Masters program (**PD** breaking news).

The university aims to submit the paperwork to the Australian Pharmacy Council in Apr, to secure accreditation for the course by Aug, which would allow for an initial intake of around 30 students to start in 2023.

The program is being developed in the context of the proposed changes in the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement that will see it recognised as a clinical doctorate in the future (**PD** 23 Jun 2020).

Organisers of the program have said it will have "a strong focus on First Nations health and inter professional collaboration that is particularly relevant to the NT health context, but will translate across many of the professional settings" of pharmacy.

The proposed Masters course

has been announced less than three years after the university revealed it was cutting its Bachelor of Pharmacy program (**PD** 20 Aug 2019), and will mean there will only be a 12-month period where the institution will not be producing graduates for an intern year.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia NT Branch President, Peter Hatwell, welcomed the new course.

"I am very excited about the course, as I think home grown pharmacists with a strong emphasis on Indigenous health is greatly needed in this state," he said.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia SA/NT Branch Vice President, Samuel Keitaanpaa, told **Pharmacy Daily** that the course was critical to plug existing gaps in the sector's workforce.

"We face a big workforce issue," he said.

"The hospitals did a big recruitment, which combined with pharmacists moving to other settings, left a lot of holes in



community pharmacy.

"The NT pharmacy program was started to meet the issue of a workforce shortage and reliance on importing professionals from interstate and overseas - both of which we have seen the risks of reliance on during COVID-19, when these options disappeared."

Keitaanpaa added that there were "lots of opportunities to tailor [the new course] to the needs of the NT, such as working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and GPs".

Dispensary Corner

STAR of the British version of The Apprentice, Lord Alan Sugar, appears to have little time for the business skills of those working in the pharmacy sector.

Just three weeks into the latest series and Sugar has uttered the dreaded words "You're fired" to pharmacy retail manager, Harry Mahmood, and pharmacist, Navid Sole.

Despite getting booted from the show Sole said it had given him an opportunity to draw attention to the work pharmacists have done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We've been working so hard during this pandemic, and we really haven't got much appreciation," he said.

"[The show has been] a good stepping stone to put pharmacists out there."

Pharmacy ready for critical booster role

COMMUNITY pharmacies are ready, willing and able to join the next phase of the COVID-19 booster program for 16 and 17-year-olds, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, says.

Welcoming the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) decision to grant provisional approval for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be used as a booster for older teens (**PD** breaking news), Twomey said it was the next logical step for the booster campaign, with the new school year due to start next week.

Plans for the rollout of the boosters will be clarified when the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) issues its advice in the coming days.

"Community pharmacists are finding a consistent level of enquiry from parents and from 16 to 17-year-olds themselves on how best to keep themselves safe," he said.

"We are close to the start of the school year. The greater the level of vaccination, the less the chances will be of COVID variants spreading through a school population."

API deal delivering for MedAdvisor

INCREASED network capacity created by medtech firm, MedAdvisor's deal with Australian Pharmaceutical Industries (API) is delivering revenue growth for the company.

In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange, MedAdvisor reported revenue growth in Australia for the first half of the 2022 financial year was up 33% on the prior corresponding period, following the announcement of a five-year agreement with the wholesaler, which added close to 250 Priceline Pharmacy stores to its network (**PD** 30 Jul 2021).

The company noted that more than 4,000 pharmacies across the country were signed up to use its platform as of 31 Dec 2021, up from 3,700 on 30 Jun 2021.

MedAdvisor reported that the COVID-19 vaccination rollout has played a significant role in fueling transaction growth with more than 3 million doses administered through pharmacies using its products.

The number of patients using MedAdvisor has grown by approximately 400,000 since 20 Jun 2021, with its new V6 platform delivering a positive customer experience.