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Time to get political

PHARMACY owners are being urged to engage with their local candidates ahead of this year's Federal Election to push for a reduction in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) co-payment.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, told a webinar last week, that while the organisation has been lobbying both sides of Parliament to adopt the organisation's Affordable Medicines Reform policy - which seeks to cut the co-payment from \$42.50 to \$19 (*PD* 10 Sep 2021) - "Nothing is more powerful than a grass roots campaign, with local pharmacists talking to prospective candidates".

Twomey encouraged pharmacists to engage with local media outlets to highlight the Guild's concerns about the health risks related to risking medicines costs.

"We can do a lot centrally," he said.

"But... the most powerful thing you can do is identify some of the patients in your cohort who would benefit from the lowering of the general co-payment.

"If we do nothing this co-payment will go from \$42.50 to \$50 within the next decade.



"There is nothing affordable about a \$50 co-payment."

Twomey added that Guild research conducted in 15 marginal electorates had found that close to one-in-three middle-income households had found it difficult to afford medicines on the PBS in the last 12 months, with 13% of people reporting that they had gone without a prescription medication because they could not afford it.

Today's issue of PD

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

- iNova Pharmaceuticals
- Sigma Healthcare

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Tsuyuki to travel

CANADIAN pharmacist full scope of practice advocate, Professor Ross Tsuyuki, will attend the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP) in person, following the reopening of international borders.

APP Convenor, Kos Sclavos, said that Tsuyuki had been due to address the event virtually, but will now travel to the Gold Coast.

"In his presentation, Tsuyuki will review the principles of a full scope of pharmacist practice and the evidence for this, plus discuss the next steps that need to be considered, including removal of self-induced barriers, workflow changes, training opportunities, and a fundamental shift from reactive to proactive care," Sclavos said.

CLICK HERE for more.

Clonidine compounding warning

PHARMACISTS are being warned against making assumptions about prescriptions for clonidine, with professional indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) noting children have been hospitalised due to compounding errors.

In a practice alert issued earlier this week PDL said it was aware of a number of instances where pharmacists had not realised a prescription needed to be compounded.

"This may be due to misinterpretation of the prescriber's intentions or assumption that the strength prescribed is an error and a proprietary product is supplied instead of the item ordered.

"Vigilance is always required when dispensing all items and assumptions should never be made.

"Accuracy is also required whenever compounding medicines, particularly for those medicines

prescribed in micrograms.

"Members of the Australian Society of Compounding Pharmacists (ASCP) are aware of several serious errors involving compounding of clonidine suspension for children.

"In some cases, these incidents have resulted in hospitalisation including rare cases of fatalities.

"Clonidine is an alpha-2 adrenergic agonist with its main therapeutic use being treatment of high blood pressure.

"The commercially available tablets are available in 150 microgram and 100 microgram strengths."

PDL noted that the main areas of error included incorrect calculations of triturations, confusion when preparing triturations, incomplete worksheets, preparations made by staff with little or no formal compounding training, a poor understanding of the strength



required for the patient, and a lack of counselling of parents about potential side effects which may suggest toxicity.

"Pharmacists who receive prescriptions for clonidine suspension are advised to strongly consider whether they have the appropriate training and understanding before proceeding to compound," PDL said.

"If not, they should refer the patient on to another suitably qualified compounder."

Find the difference

PHARMACY owners looking to gain a competitive point of difference for their store are being invited to join Sigma Healthcare's PharmaSave group.

The banner offers a low-fee, flexible program, with strong buying power, to help proprietors take their pharmacy to the next level, by focusing on boosting profitability, increasing customer traffic, basket size and streamlining processes.

See **page five** for more.

Difflam drop deal

PHARMACIES will be able to take advantage of iNova Pharmaceutical's exclusive launch deal for Difflam Soothing Drops + Immune Support until 31 Mar.

The new throat-care range offers drops in three flavours, honey and lemon, eucalyptus menthol and black elderberry, and contains Manuka honey.

See **page four** for more details.

Pharmacist fined for vaping advertising

A MELBOURNE-BASED pharmacist has been issued with three infringement notices totalling \$7,992, in relation to alleged unlawful advertising of nicotine vaping products.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) reported the pharmacist had promoted the products on his pharmacy's website and related social media accounts.

The TGA issued the infringement notices to the unnamed pharmacist, having fined MEPH Pharmacy Pty Ltd, \$39,960 in relation to similar breaches of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* (PD 04 Mar) last week.

Since nicotine vaping products were listed as Schedule 4 products on 01 Oct 2021, the TGA has issued fines in excess of \$400,000, in relation to breaches of advertising and importation rules.

MEANWHILE an ACT-based newsagent has been issued two



infringement notices totalling \$26,640, in relation the alleged unlawful supply of nicotine vaping products.

The TGA reported that DPD Stores Pty Ltd, trading as Lanyon Newsagency, allegedly supplied counterfeit vaping products that did not declare that they contained nicotine.

"Counterfeit nicotine vaping products may also not meet the required safety standards to prevent nicotine poisoning," the TGA said.

"Accidental ingestion of, or exposure (such as through the skin or eyes) to nicotine vaping products can have toxic and sometimes severe effects."

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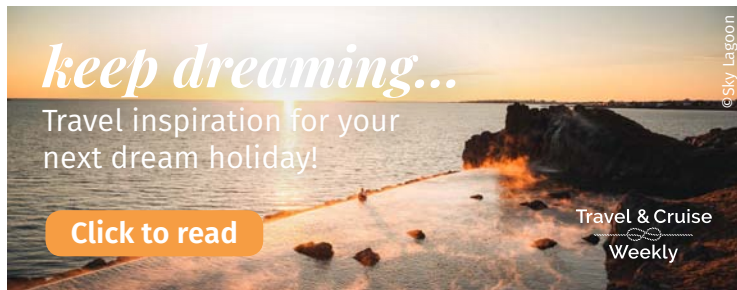
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2 WEEKS TO GO!

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Dispensary Corner

FRESH from helping Murwillumbah pharmacy owner, Skye Swift, get through flood waters to open her store, former Surfing World Champion, Mick Fanning, is back in the headlines.

The shark slapping superstar has used his social media profile to get Elon Musk to lend a hand to people in flood-affected parts of Australia's east coast.

Fanning tweeted, "@elonmusk, we need help with the flood disaster in NSW Australia".

"The people have no means of communication and really need your help... can you help us with Starlink?"

Fanning's request was granted when telecommunications provider, Netvault, announced it has donated 10 Starlink Rapid Deployment Kits to communities in the Northern Rivers, to help people reconnect with family, friends and emergency services, *nbnnews* reported.

Starlink uses low-orbiting satellites launched into space by Musk's SpaceX company to enable people to connect to the internet using a dish and router.



HEALTH & BEAUTY

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