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Mixed growth on

NEW Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) data has revealed that almost 30% more health practitioners are applying to work in Australia's health systems than in the months before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, growing the national health workforce by almost a fifth since mid-2019.

However, the number of applications finalised with registration outcomes for new pharmacists has shown a decline from the highs of Dec 2022 of 591 and Jan 2023 of 383 to just 107 in each month of Jun and Jul.

The month of Apr saw just 72 applications finalised.

The total number of applications received for registration from pharmacists was 308 for the months of Jun and Jul, the data revealed.

Overall, there are now 877,119 health practitioners registered in Australia across all professions, which is an 18% increase from the 744,437 practitioners registered in Jun 2019, before the pandemic.

Recommended measures to accelerate workforce growth will be unveiled later this year when an independent review of overseas health practitioner regulatory settings, known as the Kruk review, provides a roadmap to attract and register even more internationally trained healthcare professionals.

Taking to the streets to pause 60DD

CLOSE to 2,000 pharmacists, students, interns, and customers took to the Sydney streets yesterday, for a 'Walk for Awareness' to rally against the Labor Government's 60-Day Dispensing (60DD) policy.

Organised by the independent Community and Pharmacy Support Group (CAPS), the rally began at Town Hall Square in Sydney in what the group called a truth campaign, with a chant to ask the Government to 'pause, pause for our cause' and hear their voices (**PD** 10 Aug).

Following on from speeches, the group made their way to Martin Place.

After hearing directly from pharmacists, interns and customers, Deputy Opposition Leader Sussan Ley (**pictured** below right) reinforced her support for the independent group and stated that the Labor Government must guarantee no pharmacy will close and no one will be worse off due to 60DD.

Shadow Minister for NSW Health Matt Kean followed Ley, thanking pharmacists for all they do in the community, "year in and year out",



and said he is standing by them to find a better way to reduce the cost of medicine.

"I'm not here just to say thank you for what you did during COVID; I want to say thank you for what you do, every day, year in and year out, to help communities across our country," said Kean.

"Who supports my family through coughs and colds, fevers and flu? It's you, our pharmacists."

Speaking exclusively with **Pharmacy Daily** CAPS spokesperson and independent pharmacy owner Adele Tahan (**pictured** below left) said, "today was about making sure the Government starts listening".

"Pause the 60DD and sit down and consult with pharmacies on an agreement that will ensure that no patient will be worse off, and no pharmacy will be worse off," said Tahan.

The CAPS group aims to educate the public about how independent pharmacies will be affected by the new 60DD policy, stating that a 40% reduction in gross profit will make many pharmacies insolvent.

The impact would mean all pharmacies are unviable until some close and others pick up the volume, essentially making it survival of the fittest, CAPS stated.

The measures will not help with the cost of living.

They will benefit very few community members who may be middle to higher-income earners, accessing one to three prescription medicines, it added.



Today's issue of **PD**

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of the latest news.

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Dispensary Corner

THE odds of winning the Mega Millions jackpot are one in 303 million, much higher than the one-in-a-million chance of being struck by lightning, according to US government data.

Overtuning these odds, a lottery player in the US state of Florida won a record US\$1.58b (A\$2.35b) this week, *Yahoo News* has reported.

"After 31 drawings without a big win, a lucky ticket-holder in Florida will celebrate the summer of 2023 with a record-sized Mega jackpot, currently estimated at \$1.58b (A\$2.35b)," Mega Millions said in a statement.

The 10-figure jackpot win is expected to set a new record for the game, trumping the previous Mega Millions' top payout of US\$1.537b (A\$2.4b) won in 2018, the statement said.

The Mega Millions jackpot winner is the first declared since Apr, and if the prize sum is confirmed, it would be the third-largest payout in US lottery history, *ABC News* reported.

The winner, who has not been identified, can choose to take about US\$783m (A\$1,223m) in cash up front or receive the full sum, broken into yearly payments over 30 years, which increase by 5% annually.

Most winners choose the lump sum payout, with all winnings subject to income taxes.

The winning numbers on Tue were 13, 19, 20, 32 and 33, plus the gold ball 14.

Two other winners in Florida and North Carolina won \$2m (A\$3.1m) each.

Course to upskill

THE Australasian College of Pharmacy (College) has just launched its new national Medicines Administration Course.

With the role of pharmacists continuing to grow significantly across the primary healthcare network, this new course complements pharmacists' journey to upskill and train towards an extended scope of practice.

On completion of the CPD-accredited course, pharmacists will be able to support patients to correctly administer their medicines and optimise their medication management.

This online course covers the technique for medicines administration via different routes, the role of pharmacists in supporting their patients, and an overview of state and territory-specific legislation, as well as future expansion in pharmacists' scope of practice.

Course participants will also have access to ongoing short modules (non-accredited and non-compulsory) that cover product-specific information.

A 15-minute guide, developed in partnership with Arrotex, on medicines by injection will be available within the course in the coming weeks.

This course includes training on administering medicines by injection as in some jurisdictions, this training is required, along with being an approved pharmacist immuniser, to administer specific injectable medicines.

Non-members can enrol in the course for \$399, which is free for members, [HERE](#).

Suzanne is stepping down

SUZANNE Greenwood (pictured) has resigned as Executive Director of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia after more than four years in the role, and will be finishing up on 24 Nov, the Guild announced (*PD Breaking News* yesterday).

Greenwood joined the Guild in 2019, leading the organisation through a period of reform, driving the development and implementation of a new strategic plan and restructuring of the National Secretariat as the Guild approaches its Centenary in 2027.

Greenwood oversaw negotiations for a 7th CPA, the GuildEd transition to the Australasian College of Pharmacy and the sale of GuildLink to MedAdvisor.

Greenwood said, "I'll be continuing in my role as we work with the gov't to navigate a path forward...and look forward to genuine engagement from the gov't to negotiate an 8th CPA."

"The hope of community pharmacy is not a small ambition... as it strives for better health and wellness outcomes for all Australians."

President Trent Twomey shared, "Suzanne is a class act; she's been the driving force behind so



many reforms and is leaving the organisation in an even stronger position than she found it".

Past President George Tambassis noted Greenwood's contribution to community pharmacies was significant, personally making a difference to so many people.

"Suzanne worked tirelessly to support pharmacies and patients through some of the most difficult days of the COVID pandemic, all the while overseeing the negotiations for the 7th Community Pharmacy Agreement," said Tambassis.

"Throughout her time at the Guild, she showed a passion and understanding of the challenges and opportunities pharmacists bring to the health system, and I'm proud of all the things we achieved together."

The Guild will commence an extensive executive search process to find Greenwood's replacement.



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