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PSA backs intellectual disability plan

AUSTRALIA'S 10-year National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability, through more effective models of care is being welcomed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).

The plan, which was announced on Fri, includes an initial \$19.3 million commitment to support health workers in delivering improved monitoring of patients' conditions and to allow for greater consideration in emergency planning and responses.

PSA National President, Associate Professor Chris Freeman, said medication management would form a key component of improving care in the disability sector.

"PSA strongly supports the key objectives of the National Roadmap, in particular, the development of better models of care for people with intellectual disability and support for health professionals to deliver quality care for this cohort," he said.

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"While there is rightly an urgency to address inappropriate use of psychotropic medicines by people with intellectual disability, as PSA outlined in its submission to the Disability Royal Commission last year, there is broader concern for people with disability who require support with their medicines.

"It is vital that these vulnerable Australians, their families, and their carers have routine access to pharmacists and appropriate medication management programs to help ensure medication safety, support optimal and quality use of medicines and improve quality of life."

Disability Royal Commission witness and PSA SA/NT Branch Committee Member, Dr Manyia Angley, called for the role of pharmacists in the disability sector to be "clearly defined and resourced accordingly".

"People with intellectual disability experience stark mental and physical health disadvantage compared to

the general Australian population," she said.

"As medicines are the most powerful intervention used in healthcare, pharmacists are well positioned to improve overall health by ensuring quality use of medicines. Inappropriate medicine use, especially psychotropics, is a problem concerning both the health and disability sectors – hence, interdisciplinary collaboration is required to address it."



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Students' passion continues to grow

NATIONAL Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) President, Verity Boustead, has hailed the "passion, engagement and resilience" of the organisation's members throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Announcing the appointment of NAPSA's six new Chairs, Boustead noted that "pharmacy students have showcased their commitment to the profession" through the pandemic.

"It is encouraging that such a strong and adaptable cohort of students will be our pharmacists of the future," she said.

The new Chairs are:

- Alumni Chair - Tamara Ali, RMIT University, Melbourne.
- Research Chair - Joanne Wickens, RMIT University, Melbourne.
- Rural and Indigenous Chair - Prianka Maharaj, Monash University, Melbourne.
- Publications Chair - Madison Johnston, University of Tasmania.
- Pharmacy Awareness Chair - Ellen Jeon, Charles Sturt University, Orange.
- IPSF Chair - Max Groves, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

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Award not fit for purpose: Twomey

AUSTRALIA'S Pharmacy Industry Award 2020 "is not fit for purpose" and needs to be reviewed before a workforce crisis emerges, Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, believes.

Speaking during a NAB Health Insights webinar yesterday, the Guild President said the profession had "a big problem at the moment" in terms of attracting and retaining talent.

Twomey said COVID-19 border restrictions were exacerbating the issue with "skilled overseas migration" a "big source" of pharmacists and pharmacy assistants, which had completely dried up since early last year.

"I met with the two employee unions last week to talk about this very specific issue," he said.

"I don't think the Pharmacy Industry Award, which is now in its 11th year - because of course it was the Pharmacy Industry Award 2010 before that - is fit for purpose for attracting and retaining talent.

"I want to have a look at it. I don't want to be the President



of an industrial union that responds to the questions of work value that are put before me and waits for there not to be pressures, but a workforce crisis.

"I want to have a conversation about how I can have a more modern and contemporary industrial relations framework that enables us to attract and retain talent."

Twomey added that a revised Award was only part of the solution for making pharmacy an attractive career.

"Having full scope of practice, which enables a more clinically and

professionally rewarding career is the other half of that story," he said.

"We're deadset 35th out of 35 countries in the OECD in terms of what a pharmacist can do, the services we can provide.

"This is something we have to fix, and I know we can do it, because when we talk about the public, and we talk about the things we can do to improve healthcare, the things we can provide consumers, the benefits that it will bring to central agencies at State and Territory levels and at Commonwealth levels, the savings that it will bring to our health system, it will happen."

TGA stakeholder annual survey

HEALTH professionals, consumers and industry representatives are being invited to participate in the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA's) annual stakeholder survey.

The agency said feedback gathered from participants would assist with reporting on key performance indicators and in making ongoing improvements to the way the TGA works with stakeholders.

The online survey takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete and will remain open until Fri 27 Aug.

Results from the survey will be published on the TGA's website later this year.

Complete the survey [HERE](#).



Anti-vaxxer threatens pharmacy staff

US-BASED anti-vaccination advocate, Christopher Key, has allegedly threatened to execute pharmacists at a Missouri Walmart if they continue to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

Key and his supporters warned the pharmacy's workers that he was putting them "on notice", the *Springfield News-Leader* reported.

"If they give one more vaccine, as of this day after being put on notice, then they can be hung up and they can be executed," he said.

Key said administering the

vaccines was a violation of the Nuremberg Code.

"I do this out of love," he said of his threat to execute pharmacy workers.

"I'm not trying to give you any fear and intimidation - I'm just letting you guys know that if you continue to do this, that you guys will be held accountable."

When police arrived at the store to disperse Key and his followers, he told them "we're here to get our vaccine and for some reason they shut down the doors".

Govt ignores Respect@Work Report

PROFESSIONALS Australia, the trade union body, which includes employee pharmacists union, Professional Pharmacists Australia, is calling on the Federal Government to adopt recommendations from the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's Respect@Work Report.

The union called on the Government to amend the *Sex Discrimination Act* to include a positive duty on employers to take reasonable measures to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and



victimisation, supported by appropriate enforcement and inquiry powers.

The union also called for the *Fair Work Act* to be updated to expressly prohibit harassment and introduce a new quick and easy complaints process.

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PA National Conference postponed

COVID-19 outbreaks and lockdowns in NSW, Victoria and the ACT, have led to the postponement of the Pharmacy Assistant (PA) National Conference for the second successive year.

The event had been scheduled to take place in Brisbane on 22 and 23 Oct, however, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has pushed it back a year.

Guild Queensland Branch Acting President, Chris Owen, said the decision to postpone had been made in the interests of delegate health and safety.

“With NSW, Victoria, the ACT and part of the Northern Territory in lockdown, and with PAs from other states unable to enter Queensland, the conference could not be run as a national event,” he said.

“PAs are playing a vital frontline role supporting communities during



these lockdowns, and many are supporting pharmacist immunisers with COVID-19 vaccination administration to protect Australians.

“These activities are taking precedence in community pharmacy at the moment and we thank all PAs

for their hard work.

“We are saddened this is the second year in a row that COVID-19 has prevented PAs from being able to meet safely at the PA Conference, but look forward to hosting an even bigger and better PA Conference in 2022.”



Dispensary Corner

CHICAGO pharmacist, Tangtang Zhao, is facing 12 counts of theft of government property, after being busted for selling official COVID-19 vaccination cards online.

The 34-year-old is facing up to 120 years behind bars after he allegedly flogged 125 authentic Centers for Disease Control and Prevention vaccination cards on eBay for US\$10 a pop, to 11 customers in Mar and Apr this year.

Broadcaster, *National Public Radio (NPR)* noted that the vaccination cards are freely available to people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

However, federal officials have reported that a black market for the cards has emerged amongst the unvaccinated population in recent months.

Court documents revealed that Zhai was employed by a pharmacy group, which was identified as “Company 1”, which has stores across the US.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent in Charge, Emmerson Buie Jr, said that “knowingly selling COVID vaccination cards to unvaccinated individuals puts millions of Americans at risk of serious injury or death”.



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TGA accelerates AEN reporting

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is implementing improvements to its IT systems to make adverse event notifications (AEN) publicly available more quickly.

The changes will slash the time between an adverse event report being accepted into its database and being published on the Database of AEN, from 90 days to two weeks.

“Reports will now be made public prior to in depth TGA analysis of the data to check for patterns of adverse events that may or may not indicate a safety issue (signal detection),” the TGA said.

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