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MEGAN HAGGAN — 07/06/2018

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Abortion robots arrested in Northern Ireland; Canadian pharmacist under investigation over free Naloxone; man sues CVS over privacy

Belfast, Northern Ireland: A robot has delivered abortion pills to three women in Belfast, according to Women on Waves, a Netherlands-based organisation which aims to prevent unsafe abortions in a number of countries.

At the end of May, the organisation announced that the “abortion robots” would deliver the pills in a collaboration between Women on Waves, Women on Web and ROSA Northern Ireland.

The action was intended to draw attention to the fact that women in Northern Ireland need to access terminations through new technology such as telemedicine, drones and robots, Women on Waves says. Meanwhile Ireland recently voted to allow legislation to legalise termination.

“With the robot the abortion pills can be supplied to women Northern Ireland (sic) without breaking the law because the robot is operated from the Netherlands,” Women on Waves said in a statement.

The pills were delivered to a location in Belfast where activists dressed as “Handmaids” (as per the book and Hulu television series) and a number of police officers attended. Plans to offer counselling through the robots were thwarted by the police presence.

“Unfortunately the police arrested the robots,” Women on Waves said.

Ontario, Canada: The Ontario College of Pharmacists is investigating a pharmacist from the London area who has been distributing free naloxone kits door to door, reports the *Cambridge Times*.

Jason Newman and an assistant have given away the kits in needle and nasal form, and has given locals training in how to use them.

Mr Newman told the Times that he feels naloxone should be more widely accessible and that pharmacists can help prevent deaths from overdose by reaching out, rather than waiting to be approached for the kits in pharmacies.

The College’s website shows that Mr Newman has “agreed to immediately cease the dispensing and/or sale of naloxone or facilitating the dispensing and/or sale of naloxone to persons except in accordance with the College’s guidance document, Dispensing or Selling Naloxone”.

“In particular, Mr Newman and the Pharmacy shall ensure that appropriate assessment and training are provided by a pharmacist to persons dispensed and/or sold naloxone,” the site says.

Mr Newman is reportedly unsure why the distribution program has raised eyebrows and says that he is following

the relevant regulations.

Long Island, New York: A man is suing CVS Pharmacy after a pharmacist talked about his Viagra prescription to his wife against his wishes – which the man says led to the breakdown of his marriage.

Michael Feinberg told workers at the Merrick Road CVS that he would pay for the Viagra script to be filled himself, rather than going through his insurance.

Several days later, his wife called the pharmacy to discuss one of her own prescriptions and a pharmacy worker began to discuss the Viagra with her, the lawsuit alleges.

According to the *New York Post*, Mr Feinberg alleges that CVS breached his privacy under a law which requires a patient to give permission before their health information is disclosed to a third party.

Mr Feinberg is reportedly seeking unspecified damages for “genuine, severe mental injury and emotional harm”.

A spokesperson for CVS told the *Post* that the group places “the highest priority on protecting the privacy of those we serve”.

England: An urgent supply service led by pharmacy has seen 66,191 referrals between December 2016 and March 2018, reports *The Pharmacist*.

The referrals were to 3,857 community pharmacies which had registered to provide the NHS Urgent Medicines Supply Advanced Service (NUMSAS). Over the period 72,676 items were dispensed, according to NHS England.

Controlled drugs made up 3.8% of the medicines requested by patients who used the service.

Pharmacists have the ability not to dispense items they feel are inappropriate; in a quarter of NUMSAS cases, they did not supply, feeling that there was “no urgent clinical need for the prescription items”.

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