

MedAdvisor records strong quarter

LISTED medication adherence firm MedAdvisor has boosted its market share, with more than 45% of Australian pharmacies now connected to the platform.

According to an ASX quarterly update issued yesterday, the company also saw record operating cash receipts of \$1.32 million for the three months to 31 Dec, with the growth following the successful acquisition of HealthNotes.

The company closed the quarter with \$5.93 million in cash, with more than 600,000 patients using the platform, an increase of over 160% over the previous quarter.

MedAdvisor has also seen rapid growth of its Patient Engagement Programs, with the systems currently utilised by nine of Australia's largest pharmaceutical companies including Novartis, Bristol-Myers Squibb, AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline and Pfizer.

CEO Robert Read said the MedAdvisor platform's Tap-to-Refill function is growing faster than patient numbers, and is now processing over \$2.5 million worth of script refills by medication value each week.

However the company does not receive revenue from these orders, Read confirmed.

Recent enhancements have also successfully launched including Diabetes Ordering and OTC Medicines Management modules.

The recent \$8m capital raising also saw strong interest from existing and new investors alongside key pharmacy groups.

CSO manager reappointed

AUSTRALIAN Healthcare Associates has been reappointed as the Administration Agency for the Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding pool under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement, after an open tender process.

AHA, which has held the role since the CSO was established under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement in 2006, will oversee the funding pool of up to \$195 million per year which is paid out to eligible CSO distributors (pharmaceutical wholesalers) that meet specific service standards for the delivery of PBS medicines to community pharmacies.

The wholesalers must also

provide National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) products to community pharmacies and other NDSS access points, with the aim of ensuring that all Australians have ongoing and timely access to the full range of PBS medicines and NDSS products regardless of where they live.

AHA ceo Richard Stock said administration of the CSO pool involved several functions including undertaking payment calculations, as well as monitoring the performance of eligible CSO distributors and conducting audits to ensure compliance with specific service standards.

AHA also administers a complaints process for community pharmacies and other access points and manages a sanctions framework.

Stock said his organisation "looks forward to continuing to ensure the aims of the program are successfully met, by working objectively and independently to efficiently administer the CSO funding pool".

US case of Coca-Cola

COCA-COLA has been charged with "misleading and deceptive advertising practices around the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages" in a US lawsuit, reports the *BMJ*.



The lawsuit, brought by the Center for Public Interest and other groups, claims the defendants, who include the American Beverage Association, have "represented falsely that sugar-sweetened beverages are not scientifically linked to obesity, diabetes & cardiovascular disease, and have waged an aggressive campaign of disinformation".

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AMA pro Vic trial

THE Australian Medical Association has voiced its support for the Victorian gov't trial which will allow pharmacists to renew scripts and adjust dosages (*PD Thu*).

Despite strong online criticism from some GPs, AMA Vic president Lorraine Baker said rather than competing with doctors, the pilot scheme is actually about pharmacist "amplification of care plans that GPs actually make".

Pharmacists reduce discharge med errors

PHARMACISTS completing medication management plans in the discharge summary significantly reduced the rate of medication errors (including errors of high and extreme risk) in medication summaries for general medical patients, according to new research published in the *MJA*.

Research authors included lead clinical pharmacist Erica Tong and general physician Dr Gary Yip, both at Alfred Health.

The study showed that pharmacist input should be more widely adopted, but for maximum effect, this would require the integration of clinical pharmacists into the team structures of all medical units, the authors recommended.

Visit mja.com.au for the study and **CLICK HERE** for the video.

Rx meds in pregnancy

SEVERAL new registered medicines have been added to the Prescribing Medicines in Pregnancy database by the TGA.

Additions include brivaracetam and emtricitabine (pregnancy category B3), carfilzomib and venetoclax (category C), irinotecan (category D), sofosbuvir/velpatasvir (category B1) and ledipasvir/sofosbuvir with ribavirin, sofosbuvir/velpatasvir with ribavirin, sofosbuvir with peginterferon alfa and ribavirin together with sofosbuvir with ribavirin (pregnancy category X).

Papaverine has also had its category amended from A to B3.

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US\$2.2b on US ads

PHARMACEUTICAL companies spent more than US\$2.2 billion on national television commercials in the USA last year, according to a new report in *Fierce Pharma*.

Top products included AbbVie's Humira (\$344m), Lyrica from Pfizer (\$221m), and Eliquis from Pfizer & Bristol-Myers Squibb (\$174m).

Pharmacy finger-prick tool

CARDIOLOGIST Dr Ross Walker will present a new tool for pharmacists at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference in March, which he says could improve the heart health of the 80% of Australians currently at-risk.

Many Australians are claimed to be at increased risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) because according to a recent study, four out of every five don't get enough Omega-3 fatty acids (found in oily fish) in their diet.

Walker believes the new finger-prick heart health test should become the "clinical standard in healthcare" and will be presenting the practice to pharmacists at the conference in hopes of it becoming broadly adopted.

"While patients can't change their family history or age, they can take action on their Omega-3 Index to reduce their risk of sudden cardiac death," he said.

"The Omega-3 Index Test is a simple finger-prick blood test that provides a window into the health of an individual.

"This test is a cost-effective marker of an individual's Omega-3 status and ... provides an excellent opportunity for community pharmacy professionals to help improve the heart health of their patients." The session will also advise on the use of supplements and how patients can retest and track their progress over time.

"Now that we have a validated test for Omega-3 levels, we should be using it to help reduce cardiovascular risk and promote wellness," Walker explained.

The Omega-3 Index Test will be available for pharmacists to test their own Omega-3 levels at the APP conference on the Gold Coast.



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Dispensary Corner

WHAT did you really eat last weekend?

Those who are tempted to downplay their junk food intake when talking to the pharmacist may be caught out by a new test which is claimed to reveal how healthy your meals are.

Reported in the *Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology* journal, the test uses "proton nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy" to analyse a patients' urine, which carries a distinct signature based on the processing of fruit, vegetables and different types of meat.

"This will eventually provide a tool for personalised dietary monitoring to help maintain a healthy lifestyle," said one of the study's authors, Dr Isabel Garcia-Perez of Imperial College London.

"We're not at the stage yet where the test can tell us a person ate 15 chips yesterday and two sausages, but it's on the way," she promised.



Win with Plunketts

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and Plunketts are giving away an Aloe Vera prize pack every day including Plunkett's Pure Aloe Vera gel, spray, moisturiser and sarong.

Aloe Vera is easily absorbed by your skin, soothing and cooling dry irritated skin. Australian made, Plunkett's Aloe Vera Gel and Spray contain 99% of the highest quality 100% certified organic Aloe. Nothing is closer to Aloe Vera straight from the plant, but Plunkett's is in a convenient tube. Visit www.plunketts.com.au

To win, be the first from QLD to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Why would you choose certified organic Aloe Vera?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Carolyn Plaistowe from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.



Scholarships closed

APPLICATIONS for the 2017 Rural Pharmacy Scholarships Scheme and the 2017 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacy Scholarship Scheme closed last Sun, with applicants to be contacted in the coming weeks.

Guild Update

Guild briefings

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia in February will conduct a national series of briefings for Guild Members and Guild pharmacy employee pharmacists.

Guild National President George Tambassis will lead the briefings which will cover a range of subjects, including: the Review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation; 6CPA risk share; pharmacy transformation and Health Advice Plus; the codeine up-scheduling decision and MedsASSIST; ongoing price disclosure cuts in 2017; the latest on the Pharmacy Trial Program and ongoing 6CPA pharmacy programs; and the vaccination opportunity for community pharmacies.

These Guild briefings will provide the widest possible geographic coverage to facilitate member attendance.

The Guild's State and Territory Branches will host the briefings and Mr Tambassis will be joined by relevant National Councillors and senior Guild staff as well as the Branch Presidents.

Please see online the proposed dates, locations and venues for the briefings. Briefings in Tasmania and the Northern Territory will be held after APP on dates to be confirmed.

For those who are unable to attend, the Guild will also be holding webinars so that all Guild members and their employee pharmacists have access to this important briefing.

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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: Level 2, Suite 1 64 Talavera Rd, Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia

P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher/Editor in chief: Bruce Piper

Managing Editor: Jon Murrie

Reporter: Mal Smith

Contributors: Nathalie Craig, Jasmine O'Donoghue, Bonnie Tai

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Melanie Tchakmadjian advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Editorial: info@pharmacydaily.com.au

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