

A new message from the CEO of GuildCare **NG**



Chemist Warehouse, Corum digital connect

CHEMIST Warehouse and Corum Health are the latest community pharmacy vendors to confirm connections to the government's My Health Record system.

The additions mean every provider has now signed up to the Australian Digital Health Agency's Community Pharmacy Software Industry Partnership (**PD** 13 Feb).

The agency said Chemist Warehouse represents 30% of the community pharmacy market, while Corum's customer base comprises 1,000 pharmacies.

Chemist Warehouse managing partner Mark Finocchiaro said the connection would enable the company's health professionals to make informed decisions through improved access to relevant and timely health information, leading to better patient health outcomes "and allowing our pharmacies to offer new and innovative services".

Corum Group ceo David Clarke said the company was "determined to take a leading roll in the connected, integrated world of digital health for the benefit of our customers and the millions of Australians who value their expertise".

PSA president Shane Jackson said connection to My Health Record would be a "game changer" in the care delivered by pharmacists.

Chemist Warehouse and Corum will join Minfos, POS Works and RxOne who recently connected with My Health Record, along with Fred IT which integrated its Fred Dispense product in 2013.

Fred IT SafeScript deal

PHARMACY Guild offshoot Fred IT has been appointed to build the new SafeScript real-time prescription monitoring system for the Victorian Government.

The project is worth \$29.5 million overall, including comprehensive training and support for health practitioners across the state.

SafeScript will monitor all 58 medicines prescribed and dispensed, as well as other high risk medicines such as benzodiazepines.

Legislation enabling the project was passed by the Victorian Parliament last month (**PD** 20 Oct), with the state pressing ahead with its own system rather than electing to participate in a national real time monitoring project.

Set to be rolled out in late 2018, SafeScript will be used to provide doctors, nurse practitioners and pharmacists instant information on the prescription histories of their patients to "enable safer clinical decisions and reduce the harms from prescription medicine misuse," said Victorian Health Minister Jill Hennessy.

Hennessy said Fred IT Group, which is now 50% owned by Telstra (**PD** 02 Oct 2013) had "intimate knowledge of the Australian medical and pharmacy sector and

a proven track record of innovation in eHealth".

She said SafeScript would leverage Prescription Exchange Services to obtain the script data for the system, and would be designed to be as quick and easy for clinicians to use as possible.

"Too many Victorians have died from the misuse of prescription medicines. This is an avoidable tragedy and that's why we're getting SafeScript done to fix it," Hennessy added.

"We are partnering with Fred IT Group so we can get the best technology for Victorians."

COPD technique and adherence critical

GIVEN the wide range of inhaler devices available, patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) need their inhaler technique and adherence checked regularly, according to new 'COPD-X Australian & NZ guidelines for the diagnosis and management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: 2017 update'.

Published by Lung Foundation Australia in conjunction with the Thoracic Society, the new guidelines place the pharmacist in a "critical" role supporting COPD patients.

Other key elements highlighted in COPD management included smoking cessation, education, and a strong partnership between primary and tertiary care, to facilitate evidence-based management of patients' health.

Guild blasts direct supply arrangements

PHARMACY Guild president George Tambassis has urged pharmacists to contact AstraZeneca and Amgen to express concerns about their direct distribution moves (**PD** Thu), with the Guild having "serious concerns" about the shifts in distribution.

"The Guild is working closely with the Federal Government on this extremely worrying chain of events," he told Guild members in an update on Fri.

"I believe it is very important that the companies that have decided to make these decisions for their own commercial benefit hear about our concerns as pharmacy owners in a more unified and louder way.

"I want to be perfectly clear on this point: these companies are shifting to exclusive direct supply for their own commercial benefit.

"Any pharmacy programs they may choose to promote as part of the change are ancillary to that primary purpose," Tambassis said.

The Guild is of the firm view that any PBS listed medicine must be available via full line CSO wholesalers, he added, with key issues including the cashflow impact of carrying larger stocks, delivery lag times, increased workloads dealing with multiple suppliers, and no certainty that CSO delivery standards will be adhered to.

"This matter is very important to the Guild, and we will advocate strongly to seek the sensible outcome that must be reached for the sake of our patients and national medicines policy," he said.

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Dispensary Corner

AUTHORITIES in Finland have asked the nation's parents to suggest a "new, more inclusive name" for the country's popular baby box, which has been given to expectant mothers for the last eighty years.

Said to have contributed to low levels of infant mortality, the box contains a "starter kit" of clothes, sheets and toys - along with a mini mattress which transforms it into baby's first bed (**below**).

Currently it is designated as a "maternity kit" but the agency which administers the program has asked for alternatives because the current name might discriminate against dads.

An online poll has garnered common responses such as "baby kit" or "family kit," while one joker quipped "how about the consequences of sex kit?"



MARIJUANA dispensaries in Nevada, USA are getting into the "Black Friday" sales frenzy, with over 40 outlets near Las Vegas offering discounts on marijuana flower products, pot-infused chocolates and concentrates.

It's the first Black Friday since recreational marijuana became legal in the state, with proponent Senator Tick Segerblom saying "it's a great stocking-stuffer".

Under new legislation it is legal for people aged 21 and over to buy up to one ounce of cannabis for use in a private home.

Deprescribing guide

NEW research published in the *Journal of Gerontology* has described new ways to characterise older people who take multiple medicines, and who are open to 'deprescribing' to reduce or stop less effective medicines.

Lead researcher, Kristie Weir from the University of Sydney's School of Public Health, said polypharmacy in the older population is increasing and can be harmful.

She said the study categorised three distinct types of people which could help guide the type of advice given by clinicians to older patients when discussing the issues around taking multiple medicines.

Type one patients are resistant to deprescribing and are very attached to their medications; type two people were open to deprescribing and preferred an active role in decision making; and type three patients deferred decisions to their doctor or carer.

She said doctors should tailor communication to individual older people taking multiple medications to provide the best level of care.

Compounding alert

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia and the Medical Board of Australia have issued a joint statement to remind doctors and pharmacists that compounded medicines must only be prescribed and dispensed if a commercial item does not meet the patient's needs.

The statement follows an update from Pharmaceutical Defence Limited which said the evolution of compounding in Australia represented "a particularly high regulatory concern at the present time" (*PD* 08 Nov 2017), with recent cases alleging unprofessional conduct by pharmacists compounding products similar to commercially available items.

The respective Boards noted that unlike medicines on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods, compounded medicines are not subject to the same rigorous assessment for product efficacy, quality and safety by the TGA.

"Additional considerations are therefore required to ensure patient safety," the statement said.

Pharmacy Board chair William Kelly said effective communication between medical practitioners and pharmacists was critical.

"If a pharmacist believes that it is not safe or appropriate to compound a prescribed medicine, they must let the prescriber and patient know so alternative treatment options can be considered," he said.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Catherine Cervasio**, Director Aromababy



Bathing babies

BEST practice for bathing newborns can be a confusing topic, especially for new parents. The fact that recommendations do vary between maternity hospitals and even midwives, makes it all the more confusing for parents.

Whilst some hospitals provide bath solution and recommend a newborn bath within the first hours after birth, others suggest no bathing product be used and in some cases, no bathing for the first 24 hours.

The Royal Children's Hospital recommends bathing newborns in plain water and to take care not to remove any vernix (the waxy, white substance present on a newborn's skin after birth) present on the infant's skin.

After the initial weeks or as required, a bland, unscented product may be used from time to time and for babies with dry skin, bathing several times per week is adequate. To help minimise irritation and the likelihood of an allergic reaction, suggest parents avoid herbal extracts, essential oils and soaps which have a high pH and can upset the skin's acid mantle.

Whilst many health professionals still suggest traditional-type bath oils which contain mineral oil, parents more frequently want to avoid petro chemicals, parabens, sulphates and propylene glycol and as such, will often ask their pharmacist for advice on the most appropriate bath solution for their baby. Parents should be encouraged to research products and read ingredient lists.

WIN WITH LE TAN

Each day this week Pharmacy Daily and Le Tan are giving away a prize pack of selected Le Tan Sunscreen and After Sun products.

The new Le Tan feel good sunscreen lotion is sweat resistant, four hours water resistant and won't run into your eyes. The new and improved formula contains hydrating ingredients such as coconut water to hydrate the skin while in the harsh Australian sun. Available in three SPF variants - 15, 30 and 50 SPF - and different size bottles. Also new is the Le Tan Cool it! After Sun range that contains three Aloe based products for instant cooling and hydration.

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