

'Out of pocket pain'

THE Consumers Health Forum (CHF) has announced the launch of an 'Out of Pocket Pain' survey for people to record their experience with additional medical costs.

With the issue of these costs now the subject of an investigation by an expert Government committee, CHF ceo Leanne Wells said, "The results will assist CHF to illustrate the extent of the problem, allowing us to highlight to the committee the hardships now confronting many patients and their families, and to shape solutions to this health policy dilemma.

"Shining more light on this issue and introducing greater transparency so patients can make choices based on both fees and the performance record of specialists is long overdue," Wells said.

"This is why CHF has proposed the establishment of an authoritative website which carries fee and performance details of all specialists."

To complete the survey, go to chf.org.au/out-of-pocket-pain.

S3 advertising permitted

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has confirmed that the advertising of Schedule 3 (Pharmacist Only) medicines is to be allowed, along with the implementation of a more timely "switch" process facilitating rescheduling of Schedule 4 medicines to S3 and/or S2.

The moves are part of a new Scheduling Policy Framework (SPF) and Scheduling Handbook, resulting from extensive stakeholder consultation and collaboration with state and territory departments.

The new SPF version has been endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council (AHMAC) and any future changes will require AHMAC endorsement.

A new "Scheduling Working Group" has been established comprising representatives from the states and territories, the medicines and chemical scheduling advisory committees, industry groups and professionals from the medicine, pharmacy and chemicals

sectors as well as consumer representatives, to meet in Feb.

This group will provide input to the factors determining suitability for advertising, to be published in the new "Guidelines for advertising substances included in Schedule 3 of the Poisons Standard".

All S3 items will be included in Appendix H by default, with the working group to consider existing S3 items for suitability for advertising when it meets shortly.

Other changes introduced in the Scheduling Handbook include a new appendix in the Poison Standard describing additional controls or requirements for pharmacist-only medicines (S3).

Applicants for scheduling of products will also be required to submit a summary for publication outlining the scheduling proposal, including the name of the substance, the proposed schedule, and a brief description addressing the relevant scheduling factors.

Visit tga.gov.au for details.

PBA data released

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has released its latest registration data, providing a snapshot of the profession as at 31 Dec 2017.

There are a total of 30,913 pharmacists across the country, with 30.6% based in NSW, 25.0% in Victoria, 19.7% in Queensland, 10.5% in Western Australia, 7.0% in South Australia, 2.4% in Tasmania, 1.8% in the ACT and 0.7% in the Northern Territory.

The majority (5,950) are aged 30-34, just ahead of the 5,596 aged between 25 and 29.

Of the total, almost two thirds of pharmacists (19,166) are female, while 11,747 are male.

See pharmacyboard.gov.au.

Cannabis PBS listing?

VICTORIAN Health Minister Jill Hennessy has confirmed a push for medicinal cannabis products to be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, to make the "life-changing" products affordable for every Australian.



Applications are now open for Appointments to The Victorian Pharmacy Authority

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP, Minister for Health is pleased to invite applications for appointments to three (3) positions on the Victorian Pharmacy Authority (Authority). They are

- **Chairperson (for a registered pharmacist only)**
- **Pharmacist member (for a registered pharmacist only)**
- **Community member (for a non-pharmacist only)**

These positions provide an exciting opportunity for suitably qualified and experienced individuals to contribute to the governance of the Authority and protection of the Victorian public.

These are paid, part-time Victorian Governor-in-Council appointments. The term of these appointments is for up to three years from 1 July 2018.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that government boards and committees reflect the composition of the Victorian community. This includes appropriate representation of women, regional Victorians, Aboriginal people, young Victorians, Victoria's culturally diverse community, Victorians with disabilities and LGBTIQ Victorians. Recruitment will consider both merit and diversity during assessment to ensure the Authority is high functioning and reflects Victoria's diversity.

Applications close at **5:00 p.m. on Monday, 12 February 2018.**

For more information please visit www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/drugs-and-poisons/Victorian-pharmacy-authority-appointments

For enquiries, please contact Eugene Bogнар at the Department of Health and Human Services on (03) 9096 5958.

For more information about the Department of Health and Human Services visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au To apply online and for other DHHS and Victorian Government job opportunities please visit www.careers.vic.gov.au

Police Checks form part of the Department of Health and Human Services recruitment process.

The department promotes diversity and equal opportunity in employment and is committed to a more diverse workforce.

If you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicant, or if you have a disability, and require advice and support with the recruitment process, please contact our Diversity Unit on DiversityInclusion@dhhs.vic.gov.au

The department is committed to the safety of its clients. The department takes a zero tolerance approach to abuse, including child abuse and abuse of people with disability. Departmental employees are required to comply with all legal requirements including the Child Safe Standards to keep children safe from harm and abuse.

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Dispensary Corner

IT MAKES perfect sense for the operation of a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol to be illegal, however in 2018 the term 'vehicle' is certainly broadening. New Jersey has just signed a new law prohibiting its citizens from flying a drone while drunk. Anybody caught flying a drone after a having a few too many will face the prospect of six months in jail, a \$1,000 fine, or both. While the law certainly makes sense, one does wonder how police in New Jersey intend to enforce the legal requirement - it's hard to imagine large-scale RBTs roaming the skies looking for wayward flying drones, or is it?



A NEW hospital being built in Aurora, Washington, will serve fewer patients despite being double the size of its predecessor, according to reports out of the United States this week. The new veterans' health facility will have fewer surgical beds, fewer psychiatric beds, no post-traumatic stress disorder exam facility and fewer care teams. With the project more than \$1 billion over budget and many years behind schedule, it's not surprising so many vets are up in arms over the development.

Codeine story 'misleading'

WHILE the rescheduling of products containing codeine has been based mainly on the fact that codeine can cause dependence, and its misuse has led to addiction and even death, it is "misleading" to argue that withdrawing the products from OTC sale will reduce codeine use, according to University of Sydney Honorary Professor of Pharmacology Peter Carroll (pictured).



Also president of the NSW branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), Carroll says there are three common claims made about codeine-containing products that are untrue:

1. Low-dose codeine doesn't improve pain relief - two trials have shown products containing paracetamol and codeine, and ibuprofen and codeine, in concentrations equal to those in Panadeine Extra and Nurofen Plus respectively, are more effective than paracetamol or ibuprofen alone.
2. Making codeine products prescription-only will reduce codeine use - data drawn from the Repatriation Benefits Scheme shows that when doctors have the option of writing either

30mg, 15mg or 8mg of codeine, more than 90% of prescriptions are written for a 30mg codeine product.

This is likely therefore to increase the dose of codeine consumed if patients are forced into the GP surgery to access it, Carroll argues.

3. Taking paracetamol and ibuprofen in combination is a better way to treat pain - there are many people who should not take ibuprofen, Carroll explains and identifies groups of patients who should not take the product.

In a positive vein, Carroll goes on to argue for a universal (doctors and pharmacies) real time monitoring system such as that which both the PSA and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia had recommended and which would allow the pharmacist to identify and help those people who may be misusing codeine-containing products.

With no such system in the doctors' software, there is no way of identifying and helping those people who may be doctor shopping to obtain multiple prescriptions for the products. **CLICK HERE** for the full argument.

Industrial hemp meet

THE Australian Industrial Hemp Conference is calling for registrations and papers, saying the meeting in Mar is to serve as a platform for growers, researchers, processors and end-market buyers to present and discuss concepts, key issues, hot topics and the latest findings in growing, producing, and the marketing of all types of industrial hemp products. This is to be the first biennial conference for anyone interested in the future of industrial hemp. **CLICK HERE** for details and rego.

Win with Milkman

Each day this week Pharmacy Daily and Milkman are giving readers the chance to win a Milkman Grooming Co King Of Wood™ Beard Oil valued at \$32.00.



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To win, be the first person from VIC or TAS to send the correct answer to the question below to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

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Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Townsville, QLD (Job# 200015280)
Family business with ownership involvement - all levels of experience welcome.
- **Pharmacy Assistant** - Melbourne's East, VIC (Job# 200015227)
Recently renovated flagship store seeks Mandarin speaking vitamins specialist.
- **Pharmacist Manager** - Mid North Coast NSW (Job# 200015245)
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