

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news plus a front cover page from Flo.

Boxed Warning input

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has published submissions received during a consultation earlier this year on guidance around Boxed Warnings. There are over 30 products on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods currently carrying Boxed Warnings, with most of the submissions giving strong support for the proposed guidance, although with some modifications.

Main concerns around the proposal related to what evidence is required to implement the warning notice, how and when it is required in both the PI and the CMI, how it is to be communicated in advertising and more.

Respondents included consumer groups, NPS MedicineWise, the SHPA and more - tga.gov.au.

Pain groups on RTPM

IMPLEMENTING a national real-time prescription monitoring (RTPM) system before developing plans for additional pain management and treatment options is "putting the cart before the horse" according to a coalition of pain organisations.

PainAustralia CEO Carol Bennett said RTPM has a role to play in reducing overdose related deaths, but such systems can only be effective if underpinned by community awareness, health professional education and effective, accessible alternatives.

Bennett was responding to this week's news that Fred IT had been awarded a \$23 million contract to develop the backbone of a national system (PD Wed).

Pharmacy cannabis markups

SOME pharmacies are imposing profit margins of up to 140% on medicinal cannabis products, according to a new report from Cannabis Access Clinics.

The study has analysed product pricing over the last 12 months as new items have come onto the market, with data collected from suppliers granted authority from the Office of Drug Control to supply medicinal cannabis in Australia.

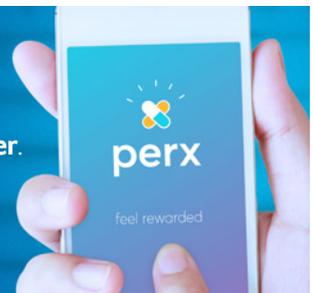
On average pharmacists marked up medicinal cannabis products by a more reasonable 26%, with reasons for higher markups including the additional handling costs of a Schedule 8 medicine and the additional tracking paperwork required with prescription of unregistered cannabis medicines.

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in the market had led to price cuts, with oil-based cannabinoids declining 11% over the last 12 months to about 30c per mg.

The floor price for cannabis oils has fallen "drastically," down almost 50% to just 10c per mg for a CBD only product, the report found.

The study noted that product prices differed substantially depending on the type of cannabinoid, with psychoactive THC items, currently \$8, coming in at 50c per mg on average.

That was more than twice the cost of CBD-only products, reflecting lower production costs for the less restricted items.

Cannabis Access Clinics also analysed patient costs based on actual monthly dosages across three treatment areas.

Chronic pain patients paid \$353 per month on average for legal medicinal cannabis in Q3 of 2018, while epilepsy treatments, requiring much higher dosage prescriptions, cost \$992 monthly.

For other conditions such as insomnia, fibromyalgia, anxiety and multiple sclerosis the average monthly patient spend was \$212.

The full report is available online at cannabisaccessclinics.com.au.

UK pharmacy powers to be extended?

PHARMACEUTICAL wholesalers in the UK have urged that pharmacists be given the right to substitute drugs on prescriptions in the event of a "no-deal" Brexit which is likely to lead to significant medicine shortages.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has backed the call, adding that the government should also consider relaxing legislation to "allow pharmacists to share and use other pharmacies' medicines" to deal with shortage, according to a *Chemist + Druggist* report.

Martin Sawyer, Executive Director of wholesaler organisation the Healthcare Distribution Association has also urged that all wholesale licences should be suspended for a limited time in the event of a no-deal Brexit, to prevent the exporting of medicines that should be kept in the UK.

NSW pharmacist immunisation boost

PHARMACISTS in NSW will be able to administer privately funded diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (dTpa) vaccines, as well as the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine and influenza immunisations from 01 Jan 2019 (PD breaking news).

The move, which will also see the minimum patient age for pharmacist vaccination drop to 16, was announced overnight by NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Health Minister Brad Hazzard.

Barilaro said "people tell us access to a GP can be difficult at times when you live in the city, country or on the coast, so expanding pharmacy vaccinations gives people more choice".

However doctors have opposed the move, with Australian Medical Association NSW President Kean-Sean Lim saying it would further fragment healthcare.

David Heffernan, President of the NSW Branch of the Pharmacy Guild, hailed the "sensible" move, saying the inclusion of the whooping cough vaccine was especially beneficial for grandparents, carers of young children and partners of pregnant women, ahead of having contact with newborn infants.

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Dispensary Corner

PHARMACIES selling mobility aids will be intrigued at the story of a Newcastle man who is expecting to be charged after police caught him towing a boat using his mobility scooter.

Channel Nine reported the case of Shane Swanscott, who finished repairing his boat around the same time as he lost his licence.

The creative character has been getting around town with his partner on a \$400 mobility scooter, and managed to rig it up to tow his tinny when he wanted to go fishing recently (pictured).

Unfortunately a highway patrol vehicle spotted him while waiting at a red light, with Swanscott now awaiting a fine in the post.



THE owner of a disobedient dog in the USA has issued a public warning urging patrons of a nearby McDonald's eatery not to feed the animal hamburgers.

Clearly unaware of the potential impacts of eating lots of fast food, the contrary canine has apparently been sneaking out at night and loitering in the restaurant carpark in the hope someone will give it a feed.

Betsy Reyes of Oklahoma City has released photographic evidence of the perverse pup pleading for leftover fries or nuggets, along with a Facebook post urging: "If you see my dog at the McDonald's on Shields Street, quit feeding her fat ass".

Strong sales for Blackmores

LISTED Australian complementary medicines company Blackmores has reported strong revenue growth of 15% to \$154 million and net profit of \$16.5 million, up 7%, for the three months to 30 Sep.

CEO Richard Henfrey said the result reflected volume growth across the business, with a solid performance in both the Australian and Asian markets.

"During the quarter, gross margins improved and we invested in major strategic initiatives, including a 55% increase in advertising and promotional spend to strengthen our brand," he added.

Australia was a standout, with sales up 19% supported by new product launches, a strong media presence and lower stock levels at the start of the period.

Henfrey noted that Blackmores remained the number one brand in Australia, recording an overall 17.5% market share.

After some shortages last year, Henfrey reassured that the company's supply chain had

"returned to business as usual levels", while the practitioner-only BioCeuticals range also did well, with sales growing 13%.

China's in-country sales enjoyed a very strong 30% growth supported by Chinese online platforms such as Kaola's Super Brand Day and Tmall's Enjoyable Day.

Allowing for the trend of indirect export via the Daigou market, the overall growth in sales to Chinese consumers was estimated at 18%.

Other Asian centres experiencing strong growth include Hong Kong (up 59%), Taiwan (up 167% with a Costco partnership), Korea up 76% and Indonesia up 115%.

Strategic priorities outlined by the CEO include preparations for the ownership of the Catalent manufacturing facility in Braeside, Vic by Oct 2019, with the number and volume of Blackmores products made there increasing.

New IT infrastructure will boost operational efficiency, while Blackmores also aims to continue to build its brand in key markets.

TGA to decode Code

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has confirmed it will host events in Melbourne and Sydney as well as online covering the basics of "Advertising therapeutic goods in 2019".

The workshops are aimed at helping stakeholders understand how to comply with the requirements of the 2018 Advertising Code, which will replace the previous 2015 Code effective from 01 Jan 2019.

The free events will take place in Sydney on 12 Nov, Melbourne on 13 Nov with an online webinar on 15 Nov 2018 - tga.gov.au.



Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

22 - 25 Nov: SHPA Medicines Management 2018; Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre; register here: www.mm2018shpa.com

27-30 Nov: ASCEPT 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting; Adelaide Convention Centre; for details visit: www.asceptasm.com

22 - 28 Jan: NAPSA Congress; University of South Australia, Adelaide; for more info see: www.napsacongressadelaide19.com

7 - 10 Mar: APP 2019; Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre; early bird registration now open: www.appconference.com

Win with Plunkett's

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away an NS-8 Heel Balm and an NS-8 Leg Care Cream valued at \$28.90.

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