



Monopoly claims 'shameful beat-up'

CLAIMS patients in rural areas are being charged three times more than those residing in metro areas for life-saving prescription medicines is "a shameful beat-up" according to the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

A spokesperson for the Guild slammed reports published across *News Limited* publications last night, which said patients were being forced to travel 100km to get prescriptions filled at discount pharmacies to save more than \$1,000 a year.

The articles suggested that the Pharmacy Location Rules had allowed Guild members to inflate medicines prices by restricting competition, however, the spokesperson said the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) was designed to ensure equality of access to prescription medicines across the country.

The spokesperson added that the PBS Safety Net limited a patient's spending on prescription medicines to a maximum of \$1550.70 a year for general patients and \$390 for concession card holders.

"Consumers have benefited for almost 30 years from the



Location Rules which have ensured a well-distributed network of community pharmacies supplying PBS medicines and patient services - where people live, and where they need those medicines and services," the Guild spokesperson said.

"The Location Rules have produced an equitable spread of community pharmacies that provides consumers a very high level of access and choice, including in rural and regional areas.

"The Location Rules prevent the clustering of pharmacies in more lucrative, higher socio-economic areas, which in turn may deprive

patients (particularly those who cannot travel longer distances and those living in rural area or lower socio-economic outer metropolitan suburbs) from having timely and convenient access to a local pharmacy."

The *News Ltd* articles were based on a survey conducted on behalf of Chemist Warehouse of 325 people living in regional Victoria, which found 66% of patients had to drive to another town to get their prescriptions filled.

The survey also reported that six-in-10 respondents said they delayed buying medications for financial reasons.

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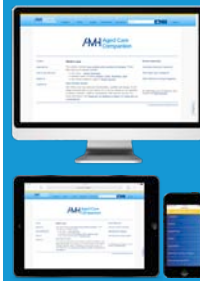
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HMR guide beneficial

USING a Medicines Conversation Guide to support pharmacists conducting Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs) could help remove points of confusion between patients and pharmacists, a study reveals.

Research into the feasibility of a conversation guide for pharmacists conducting HMRs found patients who had access to the tool understood why pharmacists were asking specific questions and enabled "shared decision making".

The authors reported that most patients found the Guide to be an appropriate addition to the HMR, with one 88-year-old patient saying, "it all seemed to be part and parcel of the proper routine. I didn't think there was anything that didn't seem to fit in with the rest of it".

Another patient reported the Guide provided a platform to discuss health concerns with their HMR pharmacist.

"It was good to tell her what my main concerns, what was worrying me the most about my health," the patients said.

"You know? Just to talk to someone about it. 'Cos when you go to the doctor, they're so busy and ... you're in and out, and ... you can't, I can't open up to doctors properly."

Pharmacists reported the Guide could be naturally integrated with the HMR interview, and that this tended to be a more effective approach than asking the two sets of questions separately.

The majority of pharmacists

involved in the trial reported the Guide was easy to use and understand, with one of the 11 pharmacists reporting it was difficult.

Of the 11 pharmacists who used the guide, five said they were likely to use the guide frequently in the future, while three said they would use it "a medium amount", and a further three reported they were unlikely to use it again.

While the pharmacists were largely positive about the Guide, some found it too restrictive, with others reporting that the wording of questions was not suitable for patients who speak English as a second language, or those from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The article was published in *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*.

Tipping winners



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CONGRATULATIONS to Billie-Jean Brummell from TerryWhite Chemmart Bundaberg, our **Pharmacy Daily** NRL Round 14 Footy Tipping winner, and also to AFL Round 13 winner, locum community pharmacist, Peter Peck.

See more details by visiting pharmacydaily.com.au.

Pregnancy meds



THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has updated its database for "Prescribing Medicines in Pregnancy" adding seven new entries, and adjusting the category for tetrabenazine from B2 to B3.

The new entries with pregnancy category in brackets are: binimetinib (D), encorafenib (D), plitidepsin (D), neratinib maleate (D), obeticholic acid (B1), tilmanoccept (C) and tezacaftor/ivacaftor (B3).

The database is at tga.gov.au.

victorian
pharmacy
authority

PHARMACIST

The Victorian Pharmacy Authority (VPA/Authority) is responsible for the regulation of pharmacy businesses, pharmacy departments and pharmacy depots in Victoria and is currently recruiting a pharmacist. This is a permanent position, minimum 4 days / 30 hours per week (negotiable).

The pharmacist's roles will be varied and include:

- Providing administrative support to the Registrar and senior staff;
- Assessing licence and registration applications and conducting pharmacy ownership audits; and
- Visiting, inspecting and advising pharmacies and pharmacy depots throughout Victoria.

Applicants must be registered as a pharmacist with AHPRA, be experienced in community practice and have a good working knowledge of pharmacy legislation, guidelines and practice standards. A current Victorian driver's licence and own vehicle is essential.

Management experience, familiarity with pharmacy commercial arrangements and/or experience in specialised areas of practice such as sterile compounding is desirable.

Written applications should be forwarded to the Registrar, Victorian Pharmacy Authority, Level 2, 15-31 Pelham Street, Carlton 3053 by email enquiries@pharmacy.vic.gov.au not later than 1 July 2019.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Helen Newett on (03) 9653 1700 or enquiries@pharmacy.vic.gov.au.

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Dispensary Corner

THERE'S nothing particularly nice about getting hooked up to an IV drip, and the thought of having a needle injected can be scary no matter what age you are.

For Ella Casano (12) who was diagnosed with an autoimmune, Idiopathic Thrombocytopenia Purpura when she was seven, the prospect of IV infusions was intimidating.

So in an effort to make the experience a little more friendly, she came up with a unique way to hide the infusion bag, cutting up a stuffed animal to cover the IV bag, and creating her first MediTeddy.

Since her first effort, Ella has tested a number of designs, and developed a business plan to roll out the MediTeddy so other kids won't need to be scared of IV treatments.

Last week Ella launched a GoFundMe page to raise US\$5,000 to order 500 teddies which she will distribute to children at no cost.



Capital Board appointments



NATIONAL pharmacy chain Capital Chemist has announced the appointment of two new members to their Board of Directors.

Chairperson Sandra Ferrington (Capital Chemist Kingston), along with existing Board members Elise Apolloni (Wanniassa) and Marcus Heiner (Bathurst) welcomed Cathy Rice (Capital Chemist Kambah) and Rebecca Young (Capital Chemist Chisholm) to the Board at their monthly meeting on 04 Jun.

Ferrington took the opportunity to thank outgoing Board Members, Ben Gilbert (University of Canberra) and Catherine Yee (Bowral) for their Board services over the past year.

The Capital Chemist group is now comprised of 49 stores across the country.

Pictured, Capital Chemist Group Business Manager, Andrew Topp, with Board Chair, Sandra Ferrington, of Capital Chemist Kingston.

Curcumin benefit

CURCUMIN may have a role in managing metabolic syndrome, according to work published in *Phytotherapy Research* - **CLICK HERE**.

Guild Update

SUPERSUPER

THE key to running a successful business is attracting and retaining good people. This is especially true for community pharmacies, where staff often feel more like family than employees.

One of the biggest issues facing workers today is financial pressure. The daily struggle to make ends meet means once the mortgage, groceries and bills are paid, there's often not a lot left over for anything else, let alone extra contributions to super.

But now with SUPERSUPER there is a way employees could add more to their super every day without having to sacrifice anything else.

With SUPERSUPER, the world's first shop-and-save superannuation rewards program, when an employee shops they get money paid straight into their super account. Spend \$100 at the supermarket and \$5 will be added to their super account.

For more information about SUPERSUPER or superannuation in general, contact GuildSuper Relationship Manager, Jeremy Eman, on 0414 293 229 or visit guildsuper.com.au/supersuper.

Win with John Plunkett

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Plunkett's are giving away the John Plunkett Dark Spot Eraser and Facial Cleanser.

John Plunkett Dark Spot Eraser is a concentrated serum with Eventone Complex™ – a blend of multiple actives to visibly lighten dark spots and boost your skin's health and radiance, plus it's easy to incorporate into your daily skincare routine with guaranteed results. RRP \$39.95. Visit: www.JohnPlunkett.com.au for more.

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

Is Dark Spot Eraser hard to incorporate into your daily skincare routine?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Elisabeth Tan.

