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SHPA mentoring

ON THE back of a successful pilot year, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia's (SHPA) face-to-face pharmacist mentoring program is back for 2019.

The SHPA mentoring program aims to provide support for early career pharmacist mentees as they establish themselves within the profession.

Releasing the program's prospectus yesterday, SHPA Chief Executive, Kristin Michaels said the face-to-face Platinum and online Gold partnership programs were designed to benefit mentors and mentees alike.

“The SHPA Mentoring Program enables pharmacist mentees to draw on the skills and experience of more senior pharmacists to overcome hurdles and roadblocks through expertly facilitated training and purpose-matched and supported partnerships,” she said.

Margie Butnoris, a 2018 mentee, described her experience of the SHPA program as a “real professional gift.”

‘Stay classy’ AMA: Guild

PHARMACIST-ISSUED absence from work certificates are continuing to raise the ire of medical practitioners, with the Australian Medical Association (AMA) again criticising their use.

Responding to a segment about small businesses' concerns about potential misuse of the certificates on the ABC's AM radio program this week, the AMA said, “pharmacists are valuable in their field but they should not dabble in diagnosis.

“A chemist doesn't have the necessary training or expertise to assess what someone's medical problems are,” an AMA spokesperson told the program.

A Pharmacy Guild of Australia spokesperson described the AMA's comments as “patronising self-interest”.

“Pharmacists have been able to issue absence from work certificates within their scope of practice for almost a decade under Federal law,” the Guild said, adding that “under guidelines jointly

developed by the Guild and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia this service has been assisting patients as required for many years.”

Taking to Twitter, Guild Victorian branch President, Anthony Tassone, thanked the AMA for its “feedback”, however, he added, “I'll take more notice of our regulator, the Pharmacy Board [of Australia] and the public”.

“Till the next time you want to scare the public about pharmacists practising within their scope - stay classy,” he added.

BMJ ditches formula

THE prestigious *British Medical Journal* has announced it would no longer carry advertisements for formula milk, citing a recent investigation into papers leading to “overdiagnosis and overtreatment” of cow's milk protein allergy, which is among many contributors to falling breastfeeding rates - bmj.com.

Boots specialists

BRITISH pharmacy giant Boots has announced a new “specialist practitioner” pharmacist role, which aims to recognise pharmacists who deliver “enhanced clinical care” in the community.

Pharmacists who have been qualified for at least 18 months can apply for the role, which will come with an “enhanced salary scale”.

Boots clinical specialist practitioners will “combine the highest level of clinical competence with a drive to innovate at pharmacy level,” such as those working at the “cutting edge of pharmacy...from pioneering research to having an outstanding clinical impact”.

The company's Pharmacy Director, Richard Bradley, told UK publication *Chemist + Druggist* that the new role would complement the traditional career pathway, which took pharmacists to become store managers and eventually other leadership positions.

Boots plans to recruit up to 250 specialists in the next few years.



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Tobacco clamp down

TOUGHER new tobacco laws have come into effect in Western Australia, aimed at reducing children's exposure to tobacco and improving community health.

The changes affect sales, signage, smoking areas and administration of the Act.

Originally announced in Sep last year, the new legislation now gives Western Australia some of the toughest tobacco laws in the country, especially with regards to protecting children.

Among the new measures smoking is not allowed within five metres of a public entrance to an enclosed public place, and within 10 metres of air conditioning intakes.

In addition, children under 18 years will not be able to sell tobacco products in retail outlets.

Xeljanz lung risk

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) is advising health professionals not to exceed the recommended dose of Xeljanz (tofacitinib) when treating rheumatoid arthritis.

The advice follows early results from an ongoing study which showed an increased risk of blood clots in the lungs and death when the normal dose of 5mg twice daily was doubled.

See ema.europa.eu for details.

Amcal & DDS sales up - Sigma

SIGMA Healthcare yesterday reported a 33% decline in net profit after tax, with the overall result hit by over \$13 million in restructuring costs (**PD** breaking news).

In community pharmacy, Sigma said its brands "continue to perform well in a competitive market," with like-for-like sales up almost 1% and Amcal and Discount Drug Stores "excelling".

"This is testament to the strong focus on professional service programs and service delivery brand members commit to deliver as part of these brand promises," said CEO Mark Hooper.

Reported EBITDA was \$76.5 million, down 17.5%, while the net after-tax profit was \$37 million for the 12 months to 31 Jan 2019.

Hooper focused on the Business Transformation program (Project Pivot) which he said was underway "following the completion of the initial diagnostic review by Accenture which identified over \$100 million in efficiency gains over the next two years".

The program is intended to restructure Sigma's operations to become more efficient, creating "greater capacity for growth following the end of the contract with MyChemist/Chemist Warehouse" in Jun this year.

"The recent events have provided the catalyst for us to undertake a detailed review of our operations to ensure we have a sustainable business operating efficiently,

but importantly one that adopts a growth mindset to capture the emerging opportunities we see for the business," he said.

"We continue to have a strong balance sheet and are well advanced in our program of capital investment in automated distribution

centres, technology and processes that gives us the capacity and capability to execute our strategies," Hooper added.

He confirmed that distribution centres in Shepparton, Newcastle and Launceston would be closed down in the second half of 2019.

Hospital sales have increased by 20% during the period, growing market share to almost 9%, the company said.

Hooper concluded his summary confirming guidance of \$55-60 million EBITDA for FY20.



Post partum drug tick

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Zulresso (brexanolone) injection for intravenous (IV) use for the treatment of postpartum depression (PPD) in adult women.

This is the first drug approved by the FDA specifically for the serious condition of PPD, which can be a major depressive syndrome with thoughts about harming self or the infant and can interfere with the maternal-infant bond.

As yet brexanolone has not been approved for marketing in Australia.

Casual conversion

THE Fair Work Commission has inserted a new "Casual Conversion" clause into the Pharmacy Industry Award 2010, as part of its Modern Award Review.

The new provision explains the conditions under which it is an employee's right to seek conversion from casual status to continue to perform as a full-time employee or part-time employee.

The key essential elements require the employee to have worked in their casual capacity for 12 months or more, and they must seek the conversion from their employer in writing.

See the full Fair Work Commission statement under provision #13.6 at awardviewer.fwo.gov.au.

Cancer survival up

SURVIVAL rates for most types of cancer are improving, even though cases of cancer diagnosed have tripled since the early 1980s, according to a report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The number of cases has risen from 47,500 in 1982 to 145,000 anticipated this year.

"This increasing trend is primarily due to rises in the number of cases of prostate cancer, breast cancer, bowel cancer and melanoma, and is partly explained by the ageing, and increasing size, of the population," said AIHW spokesperson Justin Harvey.

Survival rates from all cancers has risen from 50% in 1986-1990 to 69% in 2011-2015.

Access the report at aihw.gov.au.

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- **Pharmacist** - Wimmera region, VIC (Job# 200032161)
Offering \$\$\$ with relocation and a great opportunity to enhance your career!

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Dispensary Corner

A CAKE made by a bakery in Tennessee, USA is attracting plenty of online attention for its unusual sentiments.

Signature Desserts in Nashville posted a photo of the special order (**below**) which it created in response to a request from a woman who wanted a cake to show her appreciation to her husband for getting the snip.

The "100% Juice No Seeds Happy Vasectomy" cake was put on Instagram with the caption "We make cakes to celebrate any occasion!!" with the bakery saying the lucky recipient found it "incredibly hilarious".



AUTHORITIES in Zambia have banned a popular energy drink after finding it contained significant levels of erectile function medication sildenafil.

Power Natural High Energy Drink SX, which is also exported to Uganda, Malawi and Zimbabwe, was cited in a report from the Uganda National Drug Authority, citing a case where a customer complained of "constant sweating and a nearly six-hour erection".

Tests subsequently proved the product contained sildenafil, with production suspended "until remedial measures are put in place to ensure it is not adulterated".

PDL urges credential checks

PHARMACY profession support group PDL has issued an alert to proprietors of pharmacies around issues that have arisen in recent times, exposing legal risk.

One issue that has emerged is that some proprietors have failed to check the assumed credentials of a pharmacist employed by them.

In one case, a proprietor employed a pharmacist who was not actually qualified or registered with AHPRA.

PDL says, "This oversight will have serious ramifications with the pharmacy regulators and could jeopardise the pharmacy's professional indemnity insurance."

"When employing pharmacists, the proprietor should request registration details and also check the AHPRA register to ensure no conditions apply that will affect employment."

"The same checks will also be required for proprietors engaging AACP accredited pharmacists or accredited Diabetes Educators."

Pharmacist vaccination provides another area where

both proprietors and employed pharmacists are at risk, PDL said.

"Most jurisdictions require vaccinators to regularly update their first aid and CPR training," according to the update, which urged proprietors to request proof of this before they allow pharmacists to immunise.

The third area of deficiency PDL identified related to the lack of current contact details of clients receiving opioid replacement therapy, as was demonstrated recently when a locum pharmacist accidentally provided methadone takeaways that were twice the correct dose.

Proprietors are also reminded they must visit their pharmacies regularly and maintain open lines of communication.

A related problem PDL named is the lack of awareness of a proprietor pharmacist about details of how the pharmacy is run.

PDL referred to a case where a large amount of S8 drugs were diverted by an employed pharmacist - see pdl.org.au.

Cannabis psychosis

SMOKING potent street-sourced cannabis increases the risk of serious mental illness, research has shown.

London and Amsterdam were named as sources of strong cannabis, authors said.

See the paper at thelancet.com.

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.

27 Apr: Diabetes Expo 2019; Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre; register here: www.diabetes-expo.org.au

03 May: Colloquium 2019; Sofitel Melbourne On Collins; for more info and to register visit: www.colloquium2019.com.au

04 - 05 May: Pharmeducation Clinical Update Seminar; Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach, Sydney; for details visit: www.pharmeducation.com.au

05 - 13 Jun: PSA Offshore Refresher Conference; Montreux, Switzerland and Lyon, France; registrations now open: www.psa.org.au

28 - 30 Jun: ConPharm 2019; Pullman on the Park Melbourne; early bird offer here: www.aacp.com.au

26 - 28 Jul: PSA19; Hyatt Regency Sydney; early bird registrations now open: www.psa19.com

Win with BetterYou

This week Pharmacy Daily & BetterYou are giving away each day a prize pack including the BetterYou™ B12 Boost Oral Vitamin Spray and the BetterYou™ Magnesium Flakes 250g valued at over \$40.

Support your energy levels and maintain brain health with the BetterYou™ Vitamin B12 Oral Spray. Specially formulated to be ingested via the inside of your cheek, by bypassing your digestive system. BetterYou™ Magnesium Flakes offer pure relaxation and rejuvenation with a highly concentrated form of 100% natural magnesium chloride (47%). Soaking in a hot bath helps to relax and ease sore muscles and stiffness whilst give your skin a hydrating and soothing treat. For more info see www.betteryou.com.au.

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

How much Magnesium Chloride hexahydrate is delivered in one spray of the Magnesium Oil?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Jacinta Nagle.

