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Medicine shortages reporting up 400%

MEDICINES shortages are continuing to impact pharmacies across the country, with TACS (Technical And Customer Services) Healthcare Health Policy Specialists, Sharon Leadbitter, reporting a 400% increase in the number of new notifications to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) in the 2018/19 year.

In an article posted on LinkedIn, Leadbitter noted 1,455 shortage notifications were made in 2018/19 compared to 274 in the 12 months prior.

Pharmacy Guild of Australian Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, told *Pharmacy Daily* that medicines shortages have plagued the sector in recent years.

"Supply issues and medicine shortages have been an ongoing problem and frustration for many years, and the Guild welcomed working with the Government in



2017 and 2018, which resulted in bringing in stronger reporting requirements for manufacturers at the beginning of this year," he said.

"However, reporting alone does not resolve the problem and we believe there is still more that must be done.

"We'd like to see the Government work again with key stakeholders, including pharmacists, prescribers and consumers, to consider what further needs to be done to improve the situation.

"From a patient perspective,

medicine shortages can result in frequent brand changes, or paying higher prices if the only reliable supply has a brand price premium or is non-PBS listed or even worse – possibly risk going without.

"With the recent declaration by the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt and State and Territory Ministers at COAG that the 'Quality use of medicines and Medicines Safety' is a national health priority, the continuity and assurance of the supply chain is absolutely central and critical in helping achieve that."

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news including our weekly **Health & Beauty** feature plus a full page from **Wizard Pharmacy Services**.

Hunt for robber

NSW Police are searching for a knife-wielding bandit who attempted to hold up a Newcastle pharmacy on Sun night.

The male entered the Darby Street, Cooks Hill, pharmacy at 7:45pm and threatened a female staff member before demanding medication.

However, a second employee activated an alarm and the would-be thief fled empty-handed through a rear door.

The man has been described as being about 180cm tall and of a thin build.

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References: 1. Dermatology Expert Group. Therapeutic Guidelines: Dermatology, version 4. Topical corticosteroid preparations (Appendix 4.1). Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd [Internet]. 2019 [cited 2019 June 28]. Available from: <https://halckids.to.org.au/view/Topic/TopicFile=Topical-corticosteroid-preparations>

2. Kloxema Cream Approved Product Information, 12 September 2017.

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Saffron lifts

THE therapeutic effect of antidepressants has been shown to be enhanced by concomitant therapy with saffron extract capsules, reports Murdoch University. **CLICK HERE** for the study.

MHR at 90% & 1.5b docs

DIGITAL Australian health records database My Health Record (MHR) now has records for 90% of the population and has a total of 1.5 billion documents in the system, according to the *Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) 2018–19 Annual Report* tabled in parliament.

The report covers the period 01 Jul 2018 to 30 Jun 2019.

ADHA CEO, Tim Kelsey said, "The 2018–19 Annual Report shows the Agency is making significant progress toward the key priorities set out in the National Digital Health Strategy, endorsed by all State and Territory Governments through the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Health Council".

Among the key achievements Kelsey highlighted was the development of a national framework, and new interoperability standards, to ensure health professionals can securely and quickly send patient information to one another without



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using a fax machine.

The agency also released the Pharmacist Shared Medicines List (PSML) document type to further improve medicines safety, piggybacking on the success of the Medicines View document and its aggregation of all relevant medicines and allergy data in a single, real-time view, Kelsey added.

"We've made important strides in a range of other areas, such as supporting secure messaging and information exchange between healthcare providers."

CLICK HERE to access the report.

Opioid agonists still best Rx

DESPITE the evidence supporting the use of opioid agonists such as methadone and buprenorphine to combat opioid dependence, the uptake is hindered by barriers, says Monash Addiction Research Centre A/Prof Suzanne Nielsen.

Last year, 1,123 people died from opioids, namely illicit drugs such as heroin, and pain relievers such as codeine, oxycodone and morphine.

Nielsen identifies four barriers to their use:

Cost - weekly average cost of scripts at pharmacy can add up to \$35-\$70 just based on dispensing fees.

Stigma - is still associated with their use.

Restrictiveness - there is still the need to attend a pharmacy daily for the therapy.

Access limitations - especially in rural and regional centres.

CLICK HERE for her summary.

Vaping lung effects: FDA

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has released a new report on the lung illnesses associated with vaping, or e-cigarettes.

The report provides information for health professionals and consumers urging people to stop using the devices because of proven damage - see more at fda.gov.



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Dispensary Corner

WISDOM often comes after a hard lesson, and a few harsh ones to learnt yesterday, or more accurately this morning... but the horses, the champagne... it all seemed so good at the time.

Not so now.

Thankfully a search through Google has provided some helpful tips, with the UK's National Health Service (NHS), a treasure trove of helpful advice (some of which would have been useful yesterday morning).

Secret number one, have another drink, but put the hip-flask back in your bag, more alcohol is no cure despite what some mates might suggest - stick to water and isotonic drinks.

Thin vegetable-based broths packed with vitamins and minerals can provide an ideal meal for a delicate stomach, while lollies can help rebalance sugar levels.

The NHS also noted that painkillers can ease the worst of headaches and muscle cramps synonymous with the self-inflicted horror of a hangover.

A final sage suggestion from British health experts is to wait at least 48 hours until your next drink... however, I swear 'never again'.



Pharmacy Alliance reaches 700 milestone

MEMBER-BASED pharmacy network Pharmacy Alliance has welcomed the 700th store to its network, giving the group claim to the title of the largest independent member-based pharmacy network in Australia.

Addressing the Pharmacy Alliance's Members' Forum 2019, group MD, Simon Reynolds, said, "For over 17 years, Pharmacy Alliance has provided pharmacies with the advice, services and tools they need to streamline in-pharmacy operations, meet the needs of their customers, and improve profitability".

"Reaching 700 member stores is a testament to the value our members place on the support we provide and the benefits we bring through our rich supplier partner network," he said.



"We are proud to be the first independent pharmacy group in Australia to achieve a milestone of 700 members – an achievement that reaffirms our belief that we are Better Together."

Announced at the Members' Forum Farewell Dinner in Cairns on Tuesday night, the 2019 Pharmacy Awards category winners are:

- Hooper Centre Pharmacy

in Toowoomba, Queensland was recognised as the Alliance Pharmacy of the Year 2019.

- Ron Dunford Pharmacy in Parkes, NSW earned the award of Partner Pharmacy of the Year 2019.

- Your Pharmacy in Chinchilla, Queensland was named the Non-Branded Pharmacy of the Year 2019.

NEW PRODUCTS

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Congratulations Kalgoorlie Central!

2020 PHARMACY OF THE YEAR FINALIST

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Wizard Pharmacy Services wish to congratulate the entire team at Wizard Pharmacy Kalgoorlie Central on being named a 2020 Guild Pharmacy of the Year Finalist.

A big thanks goes out to the wider Wizard family, and everyone who has helped Kalgoorlie Central deliver such a large range of services to the Kalgoorlie community and the wider Goldfields area. This includes Aboriginal health at Bega Garnbirringu, the people of Tjuntjuntjara

at Spinifex Health Service located 680km from Kalgoorlie, through to the hospitals at Laverton and Leonora, and nursing posts in Menzies and Coolgardie.

It's fantastic to see all your hard work, team effort and community support recognised on a national stage.

We wish you the best of luck when the winners are announced in March 2020!



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