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eRx script exchange

Nine slammed over CWH news "ad"

CHANNEL Nine is under fire from pharmacists after airing a news segment on Mon night highlighting discount prescriptions offered by Chemist Warehouse compared to other community pharmacies charging more than three times the price for the same product.

The piece featured former Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) boss, Graeme Samuel, who claimed the Pharmacy Location Rules were blocking the discounter's expansion.

"They basically inhibit or prohibit the location of two or more pharmacies [being] close to each other," he said.

Voicing his support for the removal of the location rules, Samuel added "the consumer is saying 'this is what we want'".

During the segment Chemist Warehouse pharmacist, Leah Barolotta, told viewers, "we're making health more accessible".

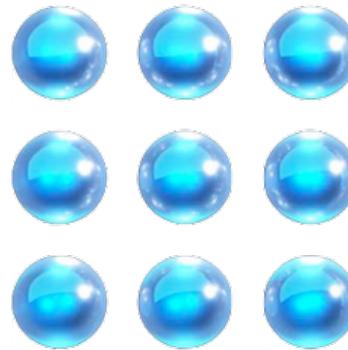
"We're making health more affordable," she said.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, refuted suggestions that the location rules were stifling competition.

"With the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), there's a direct subsidy of around 70% of prescriptions in Australia, meaning that the price is largely the same at whatever PBS-approved pharmacy you go to," he said.

Responding to the segment on Twitter, Guild NSW Branch Vice President, Caroline Diamantis, said the piece was "one-sided" and "completely overlooks the overall responsibility a community pharmacist take on when they take care of your health".

"It's a package of care, responsibilities and advice, which includes monitoring your illness and how you take medicines - another free ad," she said.



Another pharmacist stated the view that the segment was more advertorial than news.

"Really disappointed that you [Nine] have chosen to do a story on medications which is just an advertisement for Chemist Warehouse," they said.

"Why don't you look into the work that smaller community pharmacies are doing for their customers?"

"You already have the Wellness Show for Chemist Warehouse."

Today's issue of *PD*

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news including our weekly **Health & Beauty** feature and a full page from **Sigma Rewards**.

Last six days

PHARMACIES have just six days left in which to register their Pharmacy Assistants for the 2019 Pharmacy Assistant National Conference (PA2019) with online registrations closing on 07 Oct 11.59pm AEST.

Registrations after that date will only be possible on site.

Set for 11-13 Oct at Sofitel Brisbane Central, PA2019 offers a line-up of over 30 speakers.

Pharmacies sending two or more staff under a full registration ticket to PA2019 will receive a free APP2020 registration valued at over \$1,000 - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

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Schoolies morning-after pill ignorance

AROUND half of teenagers on post-graduation “schoolies” holidays are unaware emergency contraception is available and more than one-quarter believe it is harmful, according to a new Australian research study published in the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research*.

The article *Emergency contraception awareness in an at-risk population* recommends a re-think on outdated and misleading ‘morning after’ terminology to communicate more effectively with that generation.

The study by researchers from Queensland’s Griffith University analysed 498 valid responses by schoolies at Surfers Paradise in 2017, finding 63% were unaware emergency contraception was available without prescription, but that young women were two to three times more likely than young men to show understanding of its availability, use, safety and effectiveness.

Lead researcher, Denise Hope, School of Pharmacy & Pharmacology at Griffith University,



said while rates of understanding of emergency contraception in Schoolies paralleled the general population, they form a more vulnerable cohort.

“Numerous studies tell us engagement in intoxication and unprotected sex is very high at schoolies, both in Queensland and in Victoria and Western Australia, and the impact of unplanned pregnancy is significantly greater in younger people,” Hope said.

“Schoolies may not access emergency contraception when indicated due to fear of harm, uncertainty about its effectiveness window or where to access it.”

With less than two months before the first schoolies are due to descend on the famed holiday strip,

Hope says it’s time to have clearer discussions about the language of emergency contraception.

“Half of respondents thought the window of effectiveness was either 12 or 24 hours, which tells us the ‘morning after’ misnomer is clearly misleading,” she explained, given that women have “up to five days following unprotected intercourse to access the medicine from a pharmacy”.

The researchers called for a more suitable phrasing that is more descriptive, offering the term “emergency contraception”.

“Pharmacists are an accessible source of free advice, provision of support relating to sexual health and referral as necessary.”

See onlinelibrary.wiley.com.

CW ramps up footy promotion

FOLLOWING on from its major promotional activity at the Australian rules football (AFL) final last Sat, Chemist Warehouse Group has announced a range of activities and live sites for the whole family to enjoy, leading up to the National Rugby League (NRL) grand final this Sun 06 Oct.

Running from Wed 02 to Fri 04 Oct, the NRL Fan Fest at Sydney’s Martin Place will give visitors the chance to test their skills at the Chemist Warehouse House of Finals station to win free samples from Swisse, Ego QV and Oral B, and a chance to win \$1 million toward the cost of a house.

Aussies vocal

EMPLOYEES in Australia and New Zealand are the world’s most vocal when it comes to giving feedback about the workplace, a report reveals.

A survey by employee engagement specialist Peakon, found 37% of antipodean workers were quick to share their views when asked by their employers.

Despite their willingness to share their thoughts, many employees get little or no feedback from their managers, with just 11% reporting that their comments were acknowledged by their boss.

The survey found that employees wanted to see pay, communication and management improve.

QUT, CSU and UNE shine bright

QUEENSLAND University of Technology, Charles Sturt University, Sydney, and the University of New England achieved five stars for pharmacy graduate jobs with a 100% employment rate, well above the national average of 96.2%, according to *The Good Universities Guide 2020*.

The University of Tasmania and Curtin University (Perth) recorded the highest median graduate starting salaries at \$56,000 and \$47,000 respectively.

In the category of rating the educational experience, Griffith University in Queensland (rated highest at 90.1%), Curtin University (87.6%) and James Cook University in far north Queensland (86.7%) came out



on top, significantly above the national average of 79.4%.

This edition of the Guide reveals very high student satisfaction with teaching quality across all universities.

Among five-star rated universities, across all sectors, a minimum of 83% of surveyed students reported satisfaction with teaching quality, marginally above the average of 81%.

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Dispensary Corner

COMPOUNDING pharmacists in the US felt the brunt of satirist, John Oliver, on Sun night.

The British star's US show, *Last Week Tonight*, highlighted concerns about the regulation of compounding pharmacies, dubbing it "the Wild West" of the pharmaceutical industry.

Citing a US Senate report Oliver told viewers that products made by large pharmaceutical manufacturers had a failure rate of 2%, while one-in-three medications compounded by pharmacists failed to meet the required standards.

Oliver noted that some compounding pharmacies were found to have been producing medications in unsanitary conditions, with one pharmacy storing loose pills in a box next to a toilet.

He highlighted the Sep 2012 case when contaminated steroid injections produced by the New England Compounding Center led to a fungal meningitis outbreak, which claimed the lives of more than 100 people in the US.

Since the outbreak, new voluntary regulations have been introduced, however, the lack of an obligation to follow the rules has seen just 77 compounding pharmacies across the US signing up to enforce them, Oliver told the audience.

"If you need everyone to obey a rule it can't be voluntary," he said.

"It's why stop signs say 'STOP' and not 'shrug emoji'".

Pharmacist insurance inclusion

FEDERAL Health Minister, Greg Hunt, has confirmed that pharmacists will be included in newly proposed bipartisan legislation which retains subsidies for high-cost negligence payouts for non-doctor health practitioners.

Hunt took the bill to parliament for its second reading in Sep confirming the inclusion of pharmacists and midwives in the subsidy system.

"The Medical and Midwife Indemnity Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 amends the Medical Indemnity Act 2002 and related legislation to streamline the legislation underpinning the Government's support for medical indemnity insurance," Hunt said.

The new legislation, planned for adoption from 01 Jul 2020, creates "a level playing field for medical indemnity insurers and better

protection for practitioners, be they medical, allied health or midwifery," he said.

By way of explanation, Hunt said the Australian Government had decided to subsidise the medical indemnity market to prevent market failure and stabilise the industry "after Australia's largest medical indemnity provider, United Medical Protection, was placed in provisional liquidation in May 2002".

He added that the plan had been developed "in conjunction with the allied health sector, with the pharmacy sector, in particular—and I want to acknowledge and thank them for their engagement—and, as well, with the midwifery community and the medical community."

CLICK HERE to read the full speech.

Vic hospitals hit by cyberattack

REGIONAL hospitals across Victoria have been hit by a ransomware attack that has halted elective surgeries and impacted out-patient care.

The Victorian State Government revealed the incident was discovered on Mon, blocking access to hospital systems including financial management.

However, a spokesperson said, "at this time there is no suggestion that personal patient information has been accessed".

The attack followed last week's release of the My Health Record guidelines for pharmacists (**PD 27 Sep**), including cyber-security recommendations.

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