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Access to MMRs down

PATIENT access to medication management reviews (MMRs) is in decline, the Commonwealth Department of Health's 2018/19 Annual Report reveals.

Data from the report, published last week, revealed that the percentage of urban centres with a population of more than 1,000 with a resident service provider or recipient of MedsCheck, Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs), Residential Medication Management Reviews (RMMRs) or Clinical Interventions, fell by 9.1% since the 2015/16 year.

The report found that while the rate was within the Government's 80% target, it had fallen steadily over the last four years.

NPS MedicineWise Director and consultant pharmacist, Debbie Rigby, said the Department's figure indicated caps on HMRs, RMMRs and MedChecks had reduced uptake.

"I think the funding needs to change, especially for HMRs and RMMRs - maybe they should just be called MMRs," she said.

"The [Pharmacy] Guild [of Australia] seems to set and forget... there was substantial support for when those programs were



introduced, but little or no ongoing support.

"Current Guild leaders want to kill off HMRs and RMMRs as they are largely not done through community pharmacy, and yet they are the only programs which have shown positive outcomes and sustainability.

"We now have a workforce ready and able to deliver... many early career pharmacists see it as part of their future, and yet artificial constraints are imposed.

"They restrict access, especially in rural and remote areas."

While Rigby noted the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has been advocating for pharmacists to be allowed to provide MMRs through the Medicare Benefits Scheme, she warned there were risks with that.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from Iberisig.

Holiday closure

PHARMACISTS are being urged by the Department of Human Services to place their PBS stationery orders by 25 Nov to avoid running out of stationery over the Christmas and New Year period, during which the offices of the Department will be closed.

Visit humanservices.gov.au.

Polio eradication

ON WORLD Polio Day Sun 27 Oct, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) officially declared the world free of wild poliovirus (WPV) type 3, due to determined vaccination programs, and emphasised its commitment to achieving the same for the final remaining strain, type 1.

All types of WPV have been eradicated in Australia since 2002.

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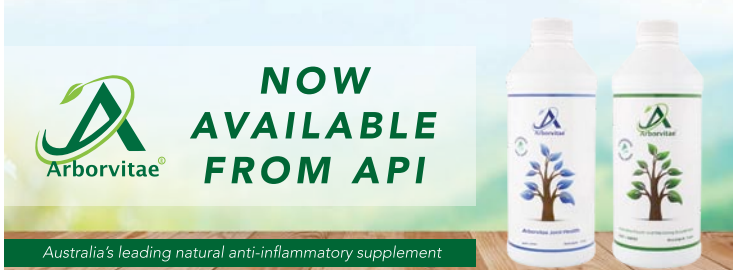
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Poll shows public backs deregulation

AN ONGOING *News Corp* poll is showing a public appetite for reforms of the Pharmacy Location Rules in the wake of repeated claims that regional pharmacies are charging up to three-times more than discounters.

The poll featured in an article across *News Corp's* tabloid websites attacking the location rules showed 80% of respondents wanted to see them overturned to increase the opportunity for discount pharmacies to open in regional areas - at the time of publication.

The article cited data from a survey conducted by Chemist Warehouse in 18 regional NSW towns, reporting that 57% of people had travelled to another town to access medicines from a discount pharmacy, and follows a similar poll in Victoria, which reported patients were being charged up to three-times the price for prescription in rural pharmacies than in metropolitan discount stores.

Melbourne Business School, Dean, Professor Ian Harper - the author of the *2015 Competition*

Policy Review - told *News Corp* "the location rules are not in the interests of consumers".

Responding to the article, a spokesperson for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia noted that Harper had assisted in the preparation of Chemist Warehouse's submission to the *King Review of Pharmacy*, calling for the abolition of the location rules, while a consultant for Deloitte Access Economics.

However, Professor Stephen King, rejected the recommendation in his 2016 report, saying evidence showed there was an inconsistent spread of pharmacies in regional areas prior to the introduction of the Location Rules in 1991.

"[The 1988 Pharmaceutical Benefits Remuneration Tribunal] found that many pharmacies in urban areas were clustered together with rural and remote areas having significantly poorer access," he said.

"In some cases pharmacies were located within 10 metres of each other, 25% of pharmacies were within 100 metres of another pharmacy and 62% were within one



kilometre of another pharmacy, while other areas struggled to attract even one."

King said the introduction of the Location Rules resulted in a restructuring of the sector that encouraged greater efficiency within the sector and led to the opening of pharmacies in areas of need.

Meanwhile, Medici Capital Managing Director, Frank Sirianni, warned moves to deregulate the industry could come at a cost to patients and the economy (*PD* yesterday).

BKL finalises deal

BLACKMORES (BKL) has taken full ownership of the Catalent Australia manufacturing facility in Braeside, Victoria, on Fri, following the completion of a \$43.2 million acquisition (*PD* 26 Apr 2018).

The Australian Securities Exchange-listed supplement brand finalised the deal with a final payment of \$33 million, with \$20 million capital payment to be made early next year attributable to upgrades and expansions at the 30,000m² plant.

From Mon the Braeside facility will provide close to 50% of all BKL's tablet and capsule requirements.

Further plans for the business will be raised at BKL's annual general meeting later this week.

APP rego open

REGISTRATIONS for the 2020 Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP2020) is now open.

The annual event will take place at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre from 19 to 22 Mar.

APP2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the largest professional conference and will feature 450+ stands.

CLICK HERE to register.

Gold Cross digital grants announced

THE winners of the Gold Cross Digital Grants (*PD* 08 Oct 2019) have been finalised with the 25 grant winners chosen by the judging panel having been contacted directly by Gold Cross and Guild Digital.

Colm Maguire, Group Executive (Member Services and Innovation) for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia commented, "I congratulate all those who submitted applications for a Gold Cross Digital Grant. "Our CP2025 research showed



that digital enablement was a high priority for pharmacies keen to stay viable to 2025 and beyond," Maguire explained.

Head lice course

GUILD Learning and Development has launched a new online course for pharmacy assistants called *Management of head lice*.

While head lice don't spread disease and aren't considered a medical condition, their presence can cause parents significant stress and anxiety.

As front-line in pharmacy, pharmacy assistants with background training in the management of head lice are in a position to ease parents' concerns and provide up-to-date information about the management of head lice.

To enrol in this course, visit guided.guild.org.au.



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Pharmacy Daily



Dispensary Corner

A US man has had a double dose of luck after winning \$200,000 on his way to his final chemotherapy treatment.

Ronnie Foster from North Carolina said he stopped off en route to the clinic for some scratch lottery tickets, and was shocked to win the jackpot.

"I saw all those zeros and I froze," he told lottery officials.

"I was already happy because it was my last round of chemo... winning this made it my lucky day," Foster said.

ALL that beer and bratwurst has to have some effect - and scientists have now quantified the shocking environmental impact of Germany's annual Oktoberfest celebration.

And the news isn't good - apparently attendees at the 16-day event in Munich last year emitted 10 times more methane than the US city of Boston over the same period.

Researchers from the Munich Technical University walked around the perimeter of the celebration with special mobile sensors, attempting to measure the flatulent emissions of the thousands of revellers.

That's somewhat of an exaggeration - they actually said much of the whopping methane count was due to incomplete combustion in cooking and heating appliances.

However, a significant proportion - about 10% - was attributed to the burps and farts of the attendees, according to a paper submitted to *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*.

The Chemist Miranda blooms



BLOOMS The Chemist has presented the Blooms 2019 Chemist Store of the Year Award to Blooms The Chemist Miranda, NSW. The Chemist Miranda's owner and manager, Eric Wu received the award at the group's 2019 partners conference, which was held earlier this month in Africa.

Also announced was the 2019 Blooms The Chemist Strategic Business Partner of the Year Award, presented to Symbion.

Other awards presented at the



gala night went to Blooms the Chemist stores in Marrickville, Bathurst, Mittagong and Tweed Transit.

Pictured above left are Eric Wu, Blooms The Chemist Miranda with John Thorne, Blooms The Chemist Chairman and Phil Smith, Blooms The Chemist CEO.

Pictured above right are Andrew Crawley and David Beaton of Symbion with John Thorne, Blooms The Chemist Chairman and Phil Smith, Blooms The Chemist CEO.

Sleep well with hypertension

PATIENTS treated for hypertension with oral therapy have better outcomes if they take their medication prior to retiring at night to sleep, according to new research.

Published in the *European Heart Journal*, the Spanish study demonstrated significantly enhanced decrease in asleep blood pressure (BP), increased sleep-time relative BP decline and reduced risk of major cardiovascular disease events.

The multicentre, controlled, prospective study involved 19,084 hypertensive patients followed up over around six years - academic.oup.com.

Gentamycin off-label risk alert

DUE to a shortage in supply of Pfizer Gentamicin 80 mg/2 mL (as sulfate) injection BP ampoule, an alternative, Gentamicin Injection USP 40 mg/mL ampoule is a suitable alternative in most situations, but not inhalation.

The TGA said it was aware that the Pfizer product was sometimes used off-label via inhalation.

Clinicians and pharmacists are warned by the Therapeutic Goods Administration that the off-label use of this substitute product needs to consider the effects on the lungs of its different preservatives.

Visit tga.gov.au for details.

Guild Update

New recruitment solution for Guild pharmacies

THE Guild has launched a central location for community pharmacies across Australia to advertise jobs.

My Pharmacy Career is a single destination for anyone looking for a job in community pharmacy and will remove the current need to visit multiple sites.

Members are well aware of the challenges that come with recruiting quality staff, so offering a website and app to assist pharmacies is a logical step.

For job seekers, finding a job in the pharmacy industry up until now has been a case of looking on a variety of websites or platforms to see what jobs are going at the moment.

My Pharmacy Career is designed for Guild members to recruit pharmacy assistants, pharmacy managers, dispensary technicians, pharmacists and all the other workforce within the sector.

It is available through the website www.mypharmacycareer.com.au or by downloading the My Pharmacy Career app in the App Store or Google Play.

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