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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **The Iron Company**, and the **December MIMS Update**.

Chinotti banned

WESTERN Australian Pharmacist, Adam Chinotti, has been disqualified from practicing and barred from seeking registration for three years after a Tribunal ruled that he had committed professional misconduct.

The State Administrative Tribunal of WA issued the ban after it found Chinotti had supplied 60 diazepam tablets to a man for cash at Cable Beach the day before the individual died by suicide in 2020.

Chinotti was also ordered to pay \$8,000 towards the Pharmacy Board of Australia's legal costs.

Scope expansion sets stage for 8CPA

STATE-BASED moves to expand pharmacists' scope of practice could pave the way for a broader range of professional services to be funded through the Eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA).

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, RSM Australia National Director of Pharmacy Services, Peter Saccasan, said that planned pharmacist prescribing trials in addition to the successful COVID-19 vaccination program, announced by State governments in NSW and Victoria, following the successful Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot - Queensland (UTIPP-Q), would create opportunities for the community pharmacy sector.

"It sends a message to the Federal Government that pharmacists' scope of practice is widening," Saccasan said.

"And it should encourage the Federal Government [to consider more services] when it comes round to the next CPA.

"It may open the opportunity for



other professional services [to be included in the 8CPA]."

While negotiations for the 8CPA are not expected to commence in earnest until 2024, Saccasan said the expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice would have a more immediate impact on community pharmacies.

Saccasan noted that pharmacies had benefited from revenue generated through the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations and other related products, however, "[that]

income to pharmacy has now evaporated", with UTI programs and travel vaccination services offering new revenue streams.

Saccasan said that while concerns have been raised by some members of the medical profession, the expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice would be "a win for doctors as well", allowing the currently stretched workforce to focus on more serious cases, while ensuring patients have timely access to healthcare services.

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Moderna's SPIKEVAX BIVALENT Original/Omicron COVID-19 vaccine has provisional approval as a booster for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2 in individuals 18 years of age and older.¹ The use of these vaccines should be in accordance with official recommendation.¹

PBS Information: This product is not listed on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) or the PBS.

▼ This vaccine is subject to additional monitoring in Australia. This will allow quick identification of new safety information. Healthcare professionals are asked to report any suspected adverse events at www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems.

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Reference: 1. Spikevax Bivalent Product Information, August 2022.



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Product Information

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Primary care needs pharmacists

SIGNIFICANT reforms need to be implemented to enable pharmacists and other health professionals to play a greater role in Australia's general practice setting, the Grattan Institute, believes.

In its *A new Medicare: Strengthening general practice* report, the Grattan Institute described the primary care system as being "designed for an earlier era" and neglected.

The report recommended that the Federal Government "fund 1,000 new nurses, physiotherapists, mental health clinicians, pharmacists and other allied health workers in the highest-need communities, to work within general practices alongside GPs and provide fee-free care."

"Pharmacists train for four years," the Institute said.

"In Australia they can prepare

and dispense medications, administer vaccinations, and review prescriptions to reduce the side effects of medications and improve their effectiveness.

"They can also educate people about health promotion, disease prevention, and proper use of medications.

"In many other countries, pharmacists can also write new prescriptions and reissue prescriptions for long-term conditions.

"They can implement chronic disease care plans developed by GPs; treat minor ailments (such as fever, gastro, and sore throat); screen patients for common chronic conditions such as osteoporosis; order lab tests; and provide home visits, palliative care, and prenatal care.

"The evidence for pharmacists doing this work is overwhelmingly



positive, confirming their safety, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness."

The Institute noted that while pharmacists could be recruited to administer more vaccines, prescribe medication and order laboratory tests, State governments would need to remove legislative restrictions on their scope of practice, while the Federal Government would need to appropriately fund services.

Vegan formula

TERRYWHITE Chemmart (TWC) is set to roll out Sprout Organic Pty Ltd's range of vegan infant formula products.

The TWC network is the fourth pharmacy group to partner with Sprout, since the company launched in 2021.

Sprout CEO, Selasi Berdie, said the brand's presence in more than 500 TWC stores would give it "added credibility", and customer reach.

"TWC has always put customers first, and we are proud to be a part of fulfilling that by providing a product that offers complete nutrition, is allergen-friendly, and certified organic," he said.

"Adding TWC to our distribution network is a material increase in our footprint in the Australian pharmacy market."

Telehealth ending for HMRs, RMMRs

THE Department of Aged Care has confirmed that temporary arrangements allowing for the delivery of medication reviews via telehealth will cease effective from 31 Dec.

The Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) noted that the measure had played a critical role in ensuring continuity of care for Australian patients during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Telehealth ensured that services under the Home Medicines Review (HMR), Residential Medication

Management Review (RMMR) and MedsCheck/Diabetes MedsCheck programs could continue being delivered despite mandatory isolation requirements and other COVID-19 related restrictions.

Effective from 01 Jan 2023, all services under these programs must once again be conducted face-to-face with the patient, an official update³ noted.

The Department has advised the PPA that no exceptional requests to conduct services via telehealth will be accepted.

FIP sets hospital pharmacy 2027 goals

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation's (FIP's) Hospital Pharmacy Section (HPS) has launched its new strategic plan.

In the foreword to the new plan, FIP HPS President, Robert Moss, said the updated goals would allow the Section to "advance on its mission to advocate and support the full utilisation of hospital pharmacists' and support staff's expertise for the benefit of people and healthcare systems".

Moss noted that while the

HPS had released a strategy document in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic had helped to accelerate changes across the pharmacy sector.

The updated goals include supporting, facilitating and enabling the sharing of resources for hospital pharmacy; setting standards for hospital pharmacy practice and workforce underpinned by patient safety; focus on global needs; and supporting individual FIP members and member organisations in all activities.

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Dispensary Corner

KEEP your kids to yourself this Christmas, is the message being sent by one Irish pharmacist, as the Emerald Isle faces a surge in RSV infections.

While sleep-deprived new parents may look to family gatherings as an opportunity to off-load their baby on gushing grandparents, aunts and uncles, Dublin-based pharmacy owner, Sheena Mitchell, said it was a "no-no" this year.

"Parents really need to keep their babies away from other people while this virus, which causes bronchiolitis, is in such high circulation," she said.

"The symptoms for RSV only become apparent between days three to five of infection, so children and family members could pass it on without realising."

Mitchell's cautious approach to festive events was backed up by Ireland's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Brenda Smyth, who noted that just one-in-10 children had received their flu vaccine this year.

"While the number of cases of RSV virus, which mainly affects very young children and a smaller number of the over-65s, is beginning to fall after reaching a record high of 734 cases in mid-Nov, this year's flu season has not yet peaked," she said.

"I am concerned about the low levels of uptake for the flu vaccine for children.

"During the recent flu season in Australia, children accounted for 60% of hospitalisations, and we want to avoid seeing similar figures here."

SHPA celebrates finest

QUEENSLAND-BASED pharmacist, Benita Suckling, has been named as the 2022 Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) Early Career Pharmacist of the Year, at the organisation's Medicines Management 2022 Conference in Brisbane on Sat.

Suckling was honoured for being a driver of innovation and a source of inspiration and mentorship for other early career pharmacists, SHPA CEO, Kristen Michaels, said.

"Benita's leadership skills have been recognised through the Excellence Award for Quality and Safety and Patient-Centred Care at the prestigious International Hospital Federation in 2018, which she received for the development and implementation of the Opioid Stewardship Service at Queensland's Redcliffe Hospital," she said.

Tasmanian Statewide Pharmacy Technician Manager, Katie Ambrose, was named as the 2022 SPHA Technician of the Year, for setting up and overseeing the implementation of the Bedside Medication Management (BMM) Project, which won the Hospital



Team of the Year Award.

Tasmanian Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, said the SHPA Awards had highlighted the quality of Tasmanian pharmacists, with his Clinical Adviser, Duncan McKenzie, also being honoured with the SHPA's Medal of Merit (PD 05 Dec).

"Hospital pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are invaluable to our Tasmanian health system and will play a vital role in the coming years as we look to introduce new and innovative ways to deliver health services for Tasmanians," he said.

"On behalf of the Tasmanian Government, I congratulate and thank our pharmacy workforce for their service."

No action required for co-payment cut

PHARMACISTS will not have to do anything to implement the \$12.50 cut to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) general co-payment on 01 Jan 2023, with software systems set to update automatically.

The move marks the first time in the PBS's 75-year history that the general co-payment has been reduced.

The PBS has said that pharmacists will be able to provide an increased discount to

general patients on prescriptions with the Commonwealth price of \$30 to \$45.60.

"When the increased discount is applied the amount paid by the patient will still count towards their PBS Safety Net," the PBS said.

"This ensures no-one will be worse off by the changed co-payment.

"Pharmacists will not be eligible to claim PBS benefits if the increased discount is applied."

Guild Update

Skin cancer campaign

THE Australian Government has announced a multi-million-dollar skin cancer prevention campaign to begin this month – Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide.

Often called the 'national cancer', Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with an estimated two in three Australians being diagnosed with skin cancer during their lifetime.

Delivered in partnership with the Cancer Council, the \$10 million national campaign will highlight the importance of being SunSmart to drive down rates of the country's most common, most costly and one of our most preventable cancers.

It is particularly important that men get the SunSmart message: almost twice as many men as women will die from melanoma this year alone.

Despite this, new research released by the Cancer Council shows that only 49% of Australian men actively seek shade to protect themselves from the sun during summer, and only 29% regularly use sunscreen.

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, Mark Butler, said skin cancer claimed the lives of more than 2,000 Australians every year.

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New Products

- Faricimab (Vabysmo)** is a humanised bispecific immunoglobulin G1 (IgG1) antibody that acts through inhibition of two distinct pathways by neutralisation of both Ang-2 and vascular endothelial growth factor A (VEGF-A). Ang-2 causes vascular instability by promoting endothelial destabilisation, pericyte loss, and pathological angiogenesis, thus potentiating vascular leakage and inflammation. It also sensitises blood vessels to the activity of VEGF-A resulting in further vascular destabilisation. Ang-2 and VEGF-A synergistically increase vascular permeability and stimulate neovascularisation. By dual inhibition of Ang-2 and VEGF-A, faricimab reduces vascular permeability and inflammation, inhibits pathological angiogenesis and restores vascular stability. *Vabysmo is indicated for the treatment of neovascular (wet) age-related macular degeneration and diabetic macular oedema.* Vabysmo is contraindicated in patients with ocular or periocular infections and active intraocular inflammation. Vabysmo solution for intravitreal injection contains faricimab 6 mg/0.05 mL and is available in packs of 1 vial.
- Maribavir (Livtency)** is a benzimidazole riboside antiviral, the activity of which is mediated by competitive inhibition of the protein kinase activity of hCMV enzyme UL97, which results in inhibition of the phosphorylation of proteins; an effect achieved at low concentrations of maribavir. *Livtency is indicated for the treatment of adults with post-transplant cytomegalovirus infection and disease resistant, refractory or intolerant to one or more prior therapies.* Livtency is contraindicated with coadministration of ganciclovir or valganciclovir. Livtency tablets contain maribavir 200 mg and are available in packs of 28 or 56.
- Osilodrostat (phosphate) (Isturisa)** is a cortisol synthesis inhibitor. It inhibits 11 β -hydroxylase (CYP11B1), the enzyme responsible for the final step of cortisol biosynthesis in the adrenal gland. CYP11B1 inhibition is associated with the accumulation of precursors such as 11-deoxycortisol and acceleration of adrenal biosynthesis including androgens. In Cushing's disease, the fall in plasma cortisol concentration also stimulates ACTH secretion, via the feedback mechanism which accelerates steroid biosynthesis. *Isturisa is indicated for the treatment of endogenous Cushing's syndrome in adults.* Isturisa tablets contain osilodrostat 1 mg, 5 mg or 10 mg and are available in packs of 60.
- Pegcetacoplan (Empaveli)** is a PEGylated peptide that binds to complement protein C3 and its activation fragment C3b with high affinity, thereby regulating the cleavage of C3 and the generation of downstream effectors of complement activation. In paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria (PNH), extravascular haemolysis (EVH) is facilitated by C3b opsonization while intravascular haemolysis (IVH) is mediated by the downstream membrane attack complex (MAC). Pegcetacoplan exerts broad regulation of the complement cascade by acting proximal to both C3b and MAC formation, thereby controlling the mechanisms that lead to EVH and IVH. These functions of pegcetacoplan underlie the observed sustained reduction in complement-mediated haemolytic activity in patients with PNH. *Empaveli is indicated in the treatment of adult patients with PNH who have an inadequate response to, or are intolerant of, a C5 inhibitor.* Empaveli is contraindicated in patients with unresolved infection caused by encapsulated bacteria including *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Haemophilus influenzae*. Empaveli solution for injection contains pegcetacoplan 1.08 g/20 mL and is available in packs of 1 vial.
- Tozinameran and Riltazinameran (Comirnaty Original/Omicron BA.1)** is a nucleoside-modified messenger RNA vaccine. It is formulated in lipid nanoparticles, which enable delivery of the non-replicating RNA into host cells to direct transient expression of the SARS-CoV-2 spike (S) antigen. The mRNA codes for membrane-anchored, full-length S with two point mutations within the central helix. Mutation of these two amino acids to proline locks S in an antigenically preferred prefusion conformation. The vaccine elicits both neutralising antibody and cellular immune responses to the antigen, which may contribute to protection against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). *Comirnaty Original/Omicron BA.1 has provisional approval as a booster dose for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2, in individuals 18 years of age and older.* Comirnaty Original/Omicron BA.1 ready to use suspension for injection contains tozinameran 15 mcg and riltazinameran 15 mcg per 0.3 mL dose and is available in packs of 10 or 195 six dose vials with a grey cap.
- Vericiguat (Verquvo)** is a stimulator of soluble guanylate cyclase (sGC). Heart failure is associated with impaired synthesis of nitric oxide (NO) and decreased activity of its receptor, sGC. Soluble guanylate cyclase catalyses synthesis of intracellular cyclic guanosine monophosphate (cGMP), an important signalling molecule that regulates critical physiological processes such as cardiac contractility, vascular tone, and cardiac remodelling. Deficiency in sGC-derived cGMP contributes to myocardial and vascular dysfunction. Vericiguat restores the relative deficiency in this signalling pathway by directly stimulating sGC, independently of and synergistically with NO, to augment the levels of intracellular cGMP, which may improve both myocardial and vascular function. The complementary cardiovascular benefits of vericiguat in heart failure patients are therefore attributed to the active restoration of the deficient NO-sGC-cGMP pathway driving heart failure progression. *Verquvo is indicated in addition to standard of care therapy for the treatment of symptomatic chronic heart failure in adult patients with reduced ejection fraction less than 45% who are stabilised after a recent heart failure decompensation event requiring admission and/or IV diuretic therapy.* Verquvo is contraindicated with concomitant use of other sGC stimulators, such as riociguat. Verquvo tablets contain vericiguat 2.5 mg, 5 mg or 10 mg and are available in packs of 28.

New Presentation

- Lorazepam (Lorazepam SXP)** is now available as a solution for injection. *It is indicated as pre-operative medication, premedication for prolonged investigations; for treatment of acute anxiety states, acute agitation; and control of status epilepticus in adults, adolescents and children.* It is contraindicated in pulmonary insufficiency, sleep apnoea syndrome, myasthenia gravis and severe hepatic insufficiency. Lorazepam SXP solution for injection contains lorazepam 4 mg/mL and is available in packs of 5 one mL ampoules.

New Indications

- **Brolucizumab (Beovu)** is now indicated for the treatment of diabetic macular oedema.
- **Pembrolizumab (Keytruda)** is now indicated, as monotherapy, for the adjuvant treatment of patients with renal cell carcinoma with a clear cell component who are at intermediate-high or high risk of recurrence following nephrectomy, or following nephrectomy and resection of metastatic lesions.

New Contraindications

- **Cisplatin (DBL Cisplatin Injection)** is now contraindicated in patients with generalised infections.
- **Mefenamic acid (Ponstan)** is now contraindicated in patients in the third trimester of pregnancy or who are breastfeeding.
- **Prochlorperazine maleate (Stemetil)** is now contraindicated in children weighing less than 10 kg, due to a possible association between use of phenothiazine containing products and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

*This list is a summary of only some of the changes that have occurred over the last month.
Before prescribing, always refer to the full product information.*