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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from Omnicell.

SHPA regos open

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) this morning opened registrations for PharmCare 2023, a conference for accredited, onsite aged care and GP pharmacists to take place 02-04 Mar in Hobart.

SHPA President, Tom Simpson, said the event would bring "powerful insights from the cutting edge of practice".

"PharmCare 2023 is here to strengthen the accredited pharmacist landscape and provide a dynamic and supportive community for accredited pharmacists, offering new voices, new perspectives and new connections" - for details see pharmcare.shpa.org.au.

Pharmacist prescribing danger: RACGP

THE Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) says the current shortage of trimethoprim across Australia is "yet another reminder of why allowing pharmacists to prescribe medicines, including antibiotics, is such a bad idea".

RACGP President, Dr Nicole Higgins, said the shortage was a much-needed wake-up call, highlighting "why carefully managing antibiotic prescribing is so important and must be left to the experts with proper medical training".

The College's statement is the latest salvo in its staunch opposition to seeing pharmacists practising to their full scope, and links the UTI prescribing pilot in North Queensland as well as similar plans in NSW and Vic to the possibility of greater antimicrobial resistance in the community.

"A shortage of a commonly prescribed antibiotic is much higher stakes in terms of poor clinical



outcomes," Higgins said.

"It can actually compound the issue of antimicrobial resistance as GPs are forced to prescribe broader spectrum antibiotics, making the entire problem much worse.

"That is why the judicious use of antibiotics is more important now than ever before.

"Australia needs proper antibiotic stewardship and evidence shows that community pharmacists overprescribe antibiotics," she said.

"GPs are the ones who understand that UTI treatment needs to be done with conservative options, if at all possible, to both conserve antibiotics when they are so hard to access and to prevent

antimicrobial resistance.

"When a patient with symptoms of a suspected UTI walks into a pharmacy they will be handed trimethoprim because when your only tool is a hammer, every solution is a nail.

"Pharmacies also have a profit motive because they will be the ones dispensing the very antibiotic they themselves have just prescribed," Higgins claimed.

"So, what you will see across Australia under these pharmacy prescribing schemes is an explosion in antibiotic prescribing at a time when we are trying to combat one of the great public health challenges of this century in antimicrobial resistance."

The RACGP President urged immediate action to "stand up to the Pharmacy Guild and stop these pharmacy prescribing powers before it is too late...the trimethoprim shortage highlights just how important it is we get this right and act without delay".



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Guild watching Woolies

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia says it's examining "any possible implications" of the newly announced Woolworths partnership with SuperPharmacy (*PD* breaking news Fri).

The supermarket giant announced an extension of its relationship with SuperPharmacy, which will see the group's current stores rebranded as HealthyLife Pharmacy and an online presence providing a "wide range of pharmaceuticals and prescription medicines, fulfilled via eScript and led by HealthyLife Pharmacy pharmacist Warren Turner".

A Guild spokesperson confirmed the organisation had "contacted the pharmacy authorities in all jurisdictions across Australia to ensure this partnership meets all the State and Territory-based registration requirements that all pharmacies must comply with".

"We also note that the Federal Government, and all State and Territory Governments, have committed to the continuing support of the existing model of pharmacy," the Guild said.

"This model has proven over many years to be an effective, accessible, safe and reliable provider of health services to communities in all parts of Australia.

"It is protected by legislation at the federal and State and Territory levels," the spokesperson added, committing to keeping Guild members informed of developments on the issue.

Under the deal Woolworths Group's "independently operated health and wellness subsidiary, HealthyLife" will acquire key



technology and warehouse assets and will in turn provide e-commerce, technology, branding, platform and warehouse services.

Six existing SuperPharmacy outlets in NSW, Vic, Qld, SA and WA will continue to be operated independently under the HealthyLife Pharmacy banner, while there will be an increased presence of the new brand online at healthylife.com.au, according to Woolworths HealthyLife Managing Director, Ananth Sarathy (*pictured*).

"HealthyLife will become a destination for all health and wellness needs," Sarathy said, with the offering including scripts, a wide range of health, wellness and beauty products, and "access to health advice from trusted health professionals and services such as telehealth consultations and a wide range of complementary health programs".

SuperPharmacy proprietor, Warren Turner, said "this is a natural step for SuperPharmacy and HealthyLife...it will provide greater access and the delivery of care as required by our customers seeking to obtain their health and wellness needs online".

PSA CEO Kinsela confirms resignation

MARK Kinsela, CEO of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) (*pictured*), last week announced his resignation from the organisation, saying he will step down in mid-2023 for personal reasons.

Kinsela was announced as the new PSA CEO just over three years ago (*PD* 16 Oct 2019), and said he had loved working at the Society.

"It's a very special organisation, and I have a lot of confidence in the PSA Board, leadership team and staff," he said.

"While my passion and commitment to PSA remains unwavering, leading an organisation through the COVID-19 pandemic has not been without impact on my own personal resilience, and I feel I need to take some time to spend with family, recharge and regroup.

"A highlight of the past three years was the appointment of our new National President, Dr Fei Sim FPS," he said.

"I have personally enjoyed working with Fei, I have absolute confidence her vision, intellect and leadership will take PSA to new heights as the peak body for all Australian pharmacists."

"PSA has entered into a new era, where it is truly an organisation which fights for pharmacists and for better health outcomes for every Australian."

Kinsela has committed to staying on as CEO until the PSA Board has recruited a new leader for the organisation, with



a search for his replacement to commence in early 2023.

Sim said this would "ensure the positive moment of the organisation is maintained and the organisation has continuity of leadership to remain focused on delivering for our members".

She paid tribute to Kinsela, saying he had been a "strong CEO and has had to lead the organisation during one of the most tumultuous times in the history of the PSA, with pressures coming from all angles during the COVID-19 pandemic".

"I have confidence in the leadership team Mark has built around him, and it gives me great belief that PSA is on a strong footing moving forward," Sim said.

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Dispensary Corner

RESEARCHERS at the University of Houston in the USA have come up with what they are describing as a “fentanyl vaccine” which could have a big impact on the opioid epidemic.

Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid associated with increasing incidence of opioid use disorder and fatal opioid overdose.

The discovery, published in the journal *Pharmaceutics*, may have a “significant impact on a very serious problem plaguing society for years - opioid misuse,” the authors said.

“Our vaccine is able to generate anti-fentanyl antibodies that bind to the consumed fentanyl and prevent it from entering the brain, allowing it to be eliminated out of the body via the kidneys.

“Thus the individual will not feel the euphoric effects and can ‘get back on the wagon’ to sobriety,” said the report’s lead author, Colin Haile.

The new vaccine has so far only been tested on rats, with a clinical-grade version under development and human trials planned soon.

The anti-fentanyl antibodies were specific to fentanyl, and did not cross-react with other opioids, meaning a vaccinated person would still be able to be treated for pain relief.

The vaccine was also a superior option compared to treatment of overdose with naloxone, because multiple doses of naloxone are often need to reverse fentanyl’s fatal effects, the scientists noted.

PSA SA museum opens



SOUTH Australian Health Minister, Chris Picton, formally opened the new Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Museum in Adelaide on Fri, featuring a collection which showcases the history of pharmacy practice.

“It is wonderful to see such an important and interesting part of our health history on display for South Australians to enjoy,” he said.

“This museum demonstrates just how far pharmacy has come, while showcasing its fascinating origins.”

The museum includes a wide range of items tracing pharmacy history, including compounding from botanical sources such as opium poppies, lavender, coca and cannabis, through to the emergence of proprietary products like asthma cigarettes and other items such as chocolate-coated Blaud (ferrous carbonate), strychnine and arsenic pills.

PSA SA and NT Vice President, Dr Manya Angley, thanked the minister for officiating at the opening.

“We are very lucky to have medicines & tools from pharmacists dating back to the 1800s,” she said.

The museum features items from

the Runges Pharmacies that were acquired by PSA in the 1980s, along with historic documents including a pharmacological text that dates back to 1704, handwritten prescription books, pharmacists’ own formularies and one of the only collections containing every edition of the PSA Australia Pharmaceutical Handbook and Formulary (APH).

“The museum is a special place for pharmacists to better connect with the profession, and will be a central part of future PSA events in Adelaide,” Angley said.

The museum is open to the public by appointment with the PSA SA Office on 08 8272 1211.

The Minister also announced the naming of the PSA SA HQ’s Lloyd Sansom Training Room and the Grant Kardachi Boardroom, in recognition of Sansom and Kardachi’s “significant end enduring leadership in pharmacy”.

Pictured at the opening are, from left: SA Minister for Health, Chris Picton; Manya Angley, PSA SA/NT Vice President; Lloyd Sansom; Grant Kardachi; and Helen Stone, PSA SA/NT Manager.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily’s* weekly comment feature. This week’s contributor is **Kavita Nadan, Co-founder, Jobs in Pharmacy**



Farewell to 2022

AS THE last weekly comment for 2022, it feels only fitting to take a quick glance back at the year that was, as well as a look ahead at the year to come.

This year has seen medicine shortages, global supply chains under pressure, and changes in legislation.

COVID-19 has brought community pharmacists to the forefront of our national vaccination, testing, and medicine response. At the same time, many pharmacies have been facing staffing challenges, while managing roll outs of additional offerings such as digital practices and telehealth. Suffice to say, it hasn’t been easy.

According to the Australian Digital Health Agency, more than 37 million electronic prescriptions were issued between May 2020 and February 2022. Turning to 2023, and I think we can expect this number will only go up. As well as this, patients expect to use pharmacies more, there’s more collaboration between healthcare providers, and pharmacy remains one of Australia’s most trusted professions. There’s plenty to look forward to, so bring on the next year! Have a safe and happy holiday season.

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