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*Reference: 1. Lang C, et al., *Planta Med* 2015;81:968-974. Supported by Engelhard Arzneimittel GmbH & Co. KG.

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today is packed with five pages of all the latest pharmacy news plus a cover page from Prospan.

Cough treatment

FLORDIS is today highlighting five different cough-relieving actions attributed to the EA 575 ivy leaf extract in Prospan and Prospan for children - see the **cover page** for details.

Haemophilia breakthrough

THE European Medicines Agency has recommended granting conditional marketing authorisation for Roctavian (valoctocogene roxaparovec) for the treatment of severe haemophilia A in adults.

The new one-off gene therapy infusion from BioMarin, which stimulates the liver to produce clotting enzymes, would replace existing factor VIII treatments which require lifelong multiple monthly injections.

Remuneration model must change

PHARMACIST remuneration remains tied to an outdated system that fails to recognise the significant changes in the role community pharmacists play in delivering healthcare, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) believes.

Launching the PSA's contemporary community pharmacy practice white paper, the organisation's incoming National President, Dr Fei Sim, called for an improvement in the sector's pay structure.

"This white paper adds to existing discussions, including PSA's call to improve pharmacist remuneration," she said.

"It seeks to recognise, restructure, and remunerate the contribution of community pharmacists within the Australian health system and is intended to set the direction for the next five years and drive community pharmacy toward a sustainable and effective practice model."

Sim, who is also Chair of the PSA's Contemporary Community Pharmacy Practice - Community of Speciality Interest Group, said the paper aimed to identify, debate and articulate the opportunities and challenges facing the sector.

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"This white paper will set the direction for the next five years and drive community pharmacist practice toward a sustainable and effective practice model," she said.

"We have seen significant shifts in the roles of community pharmacists in the last few years, and there's no doubt they will continue to change. "It is important that we look at what is working and where we can improve.

"The COVID-19 pandemic and increasingly frequent natural disasters have highlighted the critical role community pharmacists play in primary health care.

"Community pharmacists and

general practitioners together can strengthen our primary health care system, alleviating the pressure on our emergency departments and hospitals.

"Every contact a patient has with a pharmacist is an opportunity to impart a health message, deliver primary health care, and improve the health of the community.

"However, as pharmacists adapt to increasing community needs, the remuneration of community pharmacists has continued to lag, pegged to an outdated supply model.

"This continues to put excessive pressure on the workforce."

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New Vic Health Minister welcomed

NEWLY appointed Victorian Health Minister, Mary-Anne Thomas, has received a warm welcome to her new role from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

The former Agriculture Minister was moved into the Health portfolio after the resignations of Deputy Premier and Education Minister, James Merlino, Health Minister, Martin Foley, Police Minister, Lisa Neville, and Tourism Minister, Martin Pakula, on Fri.

Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, said the organisation would continue to pursue its efforts to gain authorisation for pharmacists to work to the top of their training.

“We look forward to working with Thomas and her office leading up to the Victorian State election to better utilise the scope of practice of pharmacists to help deliver better health outcomes for all Victorians,” he said.

“The scope of vaccines that



Victorian pharmacist immunisers can deliver must be expanded to better align with our training and competencies.”

Tassone also acknowledged the contribution Foley had made over the course of his 21 month-tenure as Health Minister.

“The Guild also thanks and wishes the outgoing Victorian Health Minister, Martin Foley, the best of luck in his future endeavours,” Tassone said.

“Together the Guild and the Victorian Government have helped provide fantastic health services to the public, including most recently the free flu vaccinations for all Victorians program.”

MEANWHILE, NSW Health Minister, Brad Hazzard, pointedly noted that Foley “is a really good guy”, during a speech at the Guild NSW Branch’s annual dinner in Sydney on Thu, just hours before the Victorian Minister resigned.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to Pharmacy Daily’s weekly comment feature. This week’s contributor is **Stanley Pang**, Pharmacist Manager at Wizard Pharmacy Casuarina, NT.



Creating meaningful partnerships

OUR industry has undergone many transformations in response to COVID-19. Many have taken place to ensure continuity of care while human contact was restricted.

Wizard has partnered with best-of-breed platforms to provide home delivery and online doctors for Telehealth consultations. Who else can we connect with? The answer is only limited by our imaginations.

Benefits are mutual with partnerships. It means gaining an understanding of how each can serve the community. That way, we expand our customer base and knowledge to personalise our interactions better. We can also discover potential business opportunities, leading to growth in financial figures.

Wizard has a growing national partnership network with brands like AANT, RAC and APOD. On a personal level, Wizard has given me the tools to create local partners that directly impact my community with partnerships with local GPs, hospitals, care facilities, schools and universities, local authorities, businesses and more.

Click [HERE](#) to learn how Wizard can help you better engage with your community.

Facebook sued over health ‘scraping’

META, the parent company of social media leviathan Facebook, is facing a lawsuit over the use of its Meta pixel tracker to gather confidential patient information.

A report by US non-profit technology news service *The Markup* found that the Meta pixel code was embedded on about a third of all major hospitals in America, including within password-protected patient portals where users made appointment bookings.

“Facebook allegedly received highly sensitive protected health information including medical conditions and doctors’ names, which could all be linked to the

users’ unique IP address,” the report claimed.

Meta said it had implemented a filtering mechanism to ensure any info identified as potentially sensitive health-related data is not used for its ads ranking and optimisation systems.

Once the report was published a number of hospitals and other health providers confirmed they had removed the Meta pixel from their platforms “out of an abundance of caution”.

The California lawsuit, filed by a plaintiff known only as John Doe, claims privacy violations and is seeking compensatory damages, and class-action status.

TGA site webinar





THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will next month host two webinars for the industry to learn how it’s modernising its website.

An updated structure and other improvements are based on feedback from hundreds of online users, with suggestions on how to make the site more user-friendly as well as making information easier to find.

The webinars will also detail planned ongoing future changes to the platform, with the sessions on 07 and 12 Jul to be hosted by Clair Hammami - for more information see tga.gov.au.



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US vaping denial

THE US Food and Drug Administration has issued formal “marketing denial orders” for all products currently sold in the US by JUUL Labs Inc, one of the major manufacturers of vaping devices and associated pods.

The company must stop selling and distributing the products, and any items in the supply chain must be removed.

Impacted products include the controversial JUUL vaping device, which has been blamed for a huge spike in teenage vaping, as well as tobacco and menthol flavoured pods.

The FDA said after reviewing JUUL’s premarket tobacco applications it had found they “lacked sufficient evidence regarding the toxicological profile of the products to demonstrate that marketing of the products would be appropriate for the protection of the public health”.

AMA takes another shot at NQPSPP

DOCTORS from North Queensland have voiced their opposition to plans to allow pharmacists in the area to prescribe medication for a limited number of conditions as part of a trial program.

Speaking at an Australian Medical Association (AMA) Emergency Town Hall meeting last week, the organisation’s National President, Dr Omar Khorshid, said the proposed North Queensland Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot (NQPSPP) would undermine GPs and “put patients’ lives at risk”.

“The trial, which would allow pharmacists to diagnose and prescribe drugs for 23 conditions including type 2 diabetes and heart conditions, will put patients at risk and undermines the critical role of general practice in our health system,” he said.

“This dangerous experiment removes the critical separation between prescribing and dispensing, putting pharmacy

profits before patients.

“It puts patients and pharmacists themselves at risk by asking pharmacists to do a doctor’s job, but without any medical training.”

Khorshid warned the pilot would heap pressure on employee pharmacists, whom he said were already stretched.

“Pharmacists are among the poorest paid healthcare workers in our community and this trial will put them under extraordinary pressure.

“Doctors respect the considerable skills pharmacists bring to the care of patients.

“They are experts in medications and medication management and there is no doubt that they can contribute more to the delivery of healthcare in this country.

“Healthcare workers function best when they are part of a collaborative team and in our primary care sector that’s a team coordinated by a GP and informed by medical diagnosis.”



Both the AMA and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) abandoned the NQPSPP Steering Reference Group earlier this year, (**PD 14 Feb**), leaving them with no direct involvement in planning for the program.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch President, Chris Owen, has previously described criticism of the pilot from the RACGP as “unhinged” (**PD 25 Feb**).

FOR ADULTS 60 YEARS AND OVER, SEVERAL INFLUENZA VACCINE OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE

Your state health department can provide you with up-to-date information on any cost reimbursement that may be available.

It’s important to discuss influenza protection and vaccine options with your older patients.



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New MHRA device rules

BRITAIN'S Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has announced strengthened regulation for medical devices, with the move aiming to "improve patient safety and encourage innovation".

The reforms follow the UK's exit from the European Union, and apply to devices such as hearing aids, x-ray machines and insulin pumps; new technologies like smartphone apps; and certain cosmetic products such as dermal fillers.

UK Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said "now we have left the EU, these new changes will allow innovation to thrive and ensure UK patients are among the first to benefit from technological breakthroughs".

Take Home Naloxone goes national

PHARMACIES across Australia will be able to register for the National Take Home Naloxone (THN) program from 01 Jul, when the current pilot scheme in WA, NSW and SA is expanded nationally.

Effective next month, Section 90 community pharmacies, and Section 94 hospital pharmacies in Queensland, the Northern Territory, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT may also take part, with the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) to accept claims for supplies via the PPA Portal.

Naloxone may be offered to individuals at risk of experiencing or witnessing an opioid overdose or adverse reaction, and pharmacies in the scheme's pilot states (Western Australia, NSW and South Australia) can also continue to participate as they have previously.

Payments will be made to

participating pharmacies by the PPA, under funding provided in the 2022-23 Federal Budget which included \$19.6 million over four years for the ongoing program.

Community pharmacies taking part in the scheme must register via the PPA Portal, confirm they are registered for GST and agree that the pharmacy's trading name and location may be listed on the Department of Health's website and/or provided to participating State/Territory health departments for communications relating to the program.

Pharmacies are required to source naloxone through their usual supply channel, such as a pharmaceutical wholesaler, and claimed for once the medicine has been supplied free of charge to an individual.

Claiming processes for OTC naloxone or on PBS or private script do not change, and cannot

be claimed under the THN Program.

The THN initiative allows any person across Australia to access free naloxone without prescription, with the aim of making it free and easily available for people at risk of an overdose such as illicit drug users and people who use prescription opioid medications, as well as their carers, friends, family and the community.

All sites participating in the program must submit data as part of their claims, to allow the Commonwealth Government and State Health Departments to monitor the supply of naloxone under the program.

Fees for supply of Naloxone range from around \$40 to \$50 depending on the product supplied - for more information and to register see ppaonline.com.au.

Pharmacist finds good use for crypto

PENNSYLVANIA-BASED pharmacist, Kenneth Kim, is using crypto currencies to ensure homeless people can get a meal.

Kim started the Crypto for the Homeless organisation in Apr 2019, delivering food to people in Philadelphia.

The group has since gone on to feed more than 5,000 people around the world using donated digital coins.

The pharmacist told crypto currency publication, *Cointelegraph*, that he had

initially embraced the idea of collecting digital funds after having "really bad experiences with PayPal".

He said the online payments service had shutdown or frozen accounts without any notice, preventing him from using funds.

"I didn't like the idea that there's a central power that at any moment can do that," he said.

"So I was thinking, if I use crypto, it's literally impossible for that to happen.

"I have ultimate control over it."

US chain aims to fill healthcare void

US PHARMACY giant, Rite Aid, is looking to fill gaps in access to primary healthcare by opening small stores in underserved areas.

The group's CEO, Heyward Donigan, said the company wanted to offer 24/7 access to pharmacists through "apothecary-like shops".

"What we really want people to do is think of the pharmacist as they do in Europe, as the frontline health care professional that you interact with, in some cases 30 times, 40 times a year and more than any

other health care professional," Donigan said.

"It's really an apothecary model, where the pharmacist is there, there are over-the-counter prescriptions, vitamins and supplements, remedies, first aid, but also, of course, medications.

"We're looking specifically at markets where there isn't another pharmacy within five miles, and usually, these are markets where there really aren't health care providers either."



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Dispensary Corner

HYPNOTISM has been hailed as the solution for a 41-year-old supermarket worker in the UK, who's apparently been cured of a two-decade addiction to cola. Andy Currie, from Bangor in Wales, says he's used to start the day with a bottle of Pepsi each morning, following it up with another nine litres or so of the fizzy drink before bedtime. A *Newsweek* report estimated he drank the equivalent of about 219,000 cans of Pepsi in his lifetime, with the cola habit costing about \$10,000 a year. Warnings he may develop diabetes led him to an exercise and diet regime, but he just couldn't seem to kick the Pepsi. He contacted London therapist and hypnotist David Kilmurry, and apparently broke the habit after just one online session of hypnotherapy - with the breakthrough seeing him drink water for the first time in 20 years, the report said. "I don't know what he said, but afterwards I just didn't want to drink it any more," the cured Currie said.

Seqirus moves to cut flu vax costs

PRICE cuts currently being offered by vaccine manufacturer, Seqirus, for its Flucelvax Quad influenza vaccine may be extended beyond 30 Jun.

The CSL-owned subsidiary announced it had reduced the wholesale price of its cell-based vaccine in response to surging demand for state-funded flu vaccination services this month.

Seqirus International Regions Executive Medical Director, Dr Jonathan Anderson, told *Pharmacy Daily* that current discounts would be continued if the free vaccination programs are extended.

"Seqirus welcomes the commitment from state governments to expand reimbursement of flu vaccines to Australians regardless of their age or health status," he said.

"We are committed to protecting the health of Australians and we are partnering with government and immunisation providers to make flu vaccines available to protect Australians this season.

"Flucelvax Quadis is available for order and we're working to ensure this is supplied to pharmacists across Australia.

"We have reduced the wholesale price of Flucelvax Quad to support



pharmacists and help ensure they face no out-of-pocket costs under the state government vaccination programs.

"In a season of significant flu circulation, we're pleased that we can provide pharmacists and their patients with cell-based technology that is designed to be an exact match to WHO-selected influenza strains.

"By avoiding egg-adapted mutations, cell-based vaccines may result in greater effectiveness in some seasons relative to egg-based standard vaccine.

"Of the 851 samples referred

to the WHO this season, all influenza A(H1N1) and 96.0% of influenza A(H3N2) samples were characterised as antigenically similar to the corresponding vaccine components."

"We will continue to assess the programs offered by state governments and will consider extending the price reduction in line with any extensions to these programs."

Current free flu jab programs in Queensland, South Australia, NSW, Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, are scheduled to expire on 30 Jun.

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