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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news.

Vax webinar

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation will host a webinar on vaccination tonight - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

NSW follows Qld on scope expansion

PHARMACISTS in NSW can now administer a broader range of public health and travel vaccinations, with the State Government announcing a pilot of pharmacist prescribing.

The move announced yesterday by NSW Premier, Dominic Perrottet, will see a 12-month trial to evaluate allowing pharmacists

to prescribe medication for urinary tract infections (UTIs), based on the successful Queensland program which became a permanent part of pharmacists' scope of practice in the sunshine state last month (PD 04 Oct).

The Premier said the reforms were designed to improve access to health services, by relieving pressure on GPs and emergency departments.

"By giving the community greater access to medications and vaccines through their local pharmacist, we are taking pressure off our hardworking GPs by giving them more time for patients with other medical issues," he said.

"We are stepping up to provide yet another innovative policy to improve the lives of people by offering more support for primary care.

"The Federal Government should be providing more support for GPs and a greater amount of free bulk-billing services but we can't sit around and wait for them to catch-

up and meet the growing demand."

In addition to the UTI pilot, NSW will also trial pharmacist prescribing for oral contraceptives, medication for ear infections and minor skin ailments, a move welcomed by Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) NSW Branch President, Chelsea Felkai.

"Giving patients across NSW greater access to vaccinations, contraception and medicines for minor ailments through local pharmacies will significantly improve access to healthcare, especially in regional and rural parts of the state," she said.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President, Trent Twomey, said the decision to empower pharmacists in NSW to deliver a broader range of services was "good news for patients", and urged other premiers to back pharmacy.

"Now that we have clinical alignment on the eastern seaboard, national consistency is needed to see genuine system reform," he said.

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Reference: 1. Grieve KA, Barnes TM. Increased bioavailability of hydrocortisone dissolved in a cream base. *Australas J Dermatol.* 2015; 56(2):e30-4. 2. Spada F et al. *Dermatol Ther.* 2021; 34(4):e14970. (n=100) Study sponsored by Ego Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd.

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RACGP attacks NSW prescribing plan

NSW Premier, Dominic Perrottet, is being urged to roll back from plans to expand pharmacists' scope of practice in the State, by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

RACGP President, Adjunct Professor Karen Price described the State Government's plan to authorise pharmacists to administer a broader range of vaccines for public health initiatives and travel, and pharmacist prescribing, as "a recipe for disaster".

"Healthcare is about more than just writing prescriptions and sending people out the door on their way," she said.

"This alarming NSW scheme promises to be little more than a dangerous script writing service that puts patient safety in jeopardy."

Price warned that moves to enable pharmacists to prescribe medications for conditions such as urinary tract infections (UTIs), oral contraceptives or to provide repeat scripts for blood pressure

medications would fragment patient care and result in poorer health outcomes.

"This isn't a solution for patients, this is a solution for the pharmacy lobby," she said.

"Continuity of care with a GP is so important, particularly for those patients with multiple, chronic conditions that need careful follow-up and management.

"Under this NSW scheme GPs will be flying dark because we will have no idea what the pharmacist is prescribing and vice versa.

"I cannot stress enough how dangerous that is, especially for those patients on multiple medications for serious health concerns."

MEANWHILE, NSW Minister for Regional Health and Mental Health, Bronnie Taylor, said the expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice in NSW "will make a really big difference to people being able to access quality healthcare at the right time" in rural communities.



Speaking on 2GB this morning, Taylor said the profession had highlighted its value during the COVID-19 pandemic, successfully administering vaccinations.

"They're good people, they're highly professional and they're highly trained," she said.

"It's just great to see this increased scope of practice, because it'll take pressure off GPs and off emergency departments, and that's what we're all about at the moment."

Blooms' golf day

BLOOMS The Chemist has raised \$55,000 for Make-A-Wish Australia through its annual charity golf day.

Hosted at the Strathfield Golf Club, the day brought together more than 125 corporate sponsors and ambassadors to participate in golf and a variety of other popular activities.

This included the Longest (Marshmallow) Drive, Nearest to the Pin and the Straightest Drive – all in the spirit to raise funds so Make-A-Wish Australia can continue to grant critically ill children their wishes.

Since the Make-A-Wish Australia partnership began in 2016, Blooms The Chemist has raised more than \$1.3 million from many initiatives across its pharmacy network, Business Support Office, and through the kind contributions of its local communities across the country.

PBS fraudster lands two years jail time

NSW-BASED pharmacist, Felix Chan, is set to spend two years behind bars for his role in defrauding the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) of close to \$290,000.

In a statement released on Fri, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Age Care reported that the Bungendore pharmacist made 99 false or misleading PBS claims between 01 Jan 2018 and 31 Jul 2020, for the supply of pharmaceutical benefits which were not provided to patients.

Chan pleaded guilty to three counts of offences resulting in a fraud of \$288,595, at a court

hearing in Aug.

The pharmacist has since repaid the entire amount.

"In the past 12 months, the department has received a significant number of tip-offs of suspected non-compliance or fraud of Government health payments," the Department said.

"It shows that Australians are willing to call out those in the health care sector who try to defraud taxpayers."

The Department encouraged any health practitioners with concerns about the behaviour of colleagues to use its **tip-off** form, noting cases will be reviewed.

PharmXchange exceeding expectations

UPTAKE of Corum Group's PharmXchange digital sales and marketing platform is ahead of expectations, the company's Executive Chair, Nick English, told shareholders this morning.

In an announcement to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), English said the platform was fully integrated with PharmX to enable electronic invoicing and allow suppliers to take advantage of the PharmX messaging functionality without requiring a full PharmX integration.

"This feature is especially attractive for smaller suppliers that don't have the technical

resources to manage a full PharmX integration," he said.

"There have already been a number of key large suppliers such as Haleon, Revlon, Arrotex and Blackmores sign up.

"We now have 25 suppliers representing 40 brands and 800 products on board as we manage a controlled retail roll-out where we currently have over 500 pharmacies signed to the platform.

"We see further opportunities for this type of capital light business model in other verticals, particularly where the market is fragmented."



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Mental health training needed

PHARMACISTS are well placed to curb Australia's mental health crisis, but they need more training, researchers from the University of Western Australia believe.

In an article published on *The Conversation* the authors noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had seen anxiety and depression increase by 25% globally.

"While dispensing and consulting are critical activities for pharmacists, they also help patients with questions and advice about their health, including their mental health," they said.

"Generally, pharmacists in Australia have high levels of mental health-related literacy."

Collaboration key to meds safety

PHARMACISTS have a key role to play as part of interdisciplinary hospital teams and bridging care gaps to the community and aged care facilities, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), believes.

SHPA CEO, Kristin Michaels, backed the Australian Medical Association's (AMA's) Medicines Safety Week (**PD** 11 Nov) call for greater collaboration to improve quality use of medicines.

"Interdisciplinary approaches to patient care that harness the combined skills of expert hospital pharmacists and their clinical colleagues have been proven to reduce medication-related harms, optimise medication use, decrease hospital length of stay and reduce readmissions and their associated Medicare costs," she said.

"Hospital pharmacists are at the frontier of medicines safety, leading

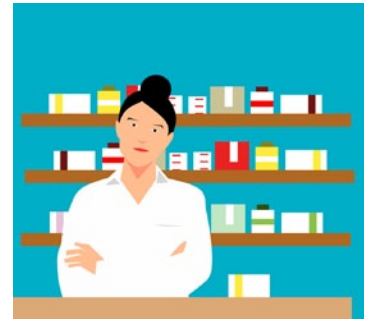
innovations such as Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting (PPMC) that benefit Australians in complex care settings.

"To leverage this specialist skill, we call for investment in the sustainability of our profession, through the commissioning of a 10-year National Pharmacy Workforce Plan, to help lead and embed Medicines Safety Week principles year-round."

With World Antimicrobial Awareness Week getting underway on Fri 18 Nov, SHPA Infectious Diseases Speciality Practice Chair, Dr Minyon Avent, said "pharmacists need to work with doctors and nurses to ensure they know how to optimise antimicrobials".

"Antibiotics are powerful tools but knowing when to use them makes you the master of these tools," Avent said.

"Every pharmacist has a role



to play to ensure that the right antibiotic, at the right dose, for the right duration, is applied for every patient.

"The prevalence of multidrug-resistant bacterial pathogens is rising worldwide.

"Patients with infections due to resistant bacteria experience delayed recovery and treatment failure and are more likely to die than patients with infections from non-resistant bacteria."

NSW Health issues poppy seed warning

HEALTH officials in NSW are warning people of the dangers of consuming large quantities of poppy seeds after a number of patients were hospitalised with severe poisoning after ingesting the seeds.

NSW Health reported "at least eight" people presented at hospitals across the State suffering the symptoms of poisoning after purposely consuming poppy seeds as a drink, and "more cases have been reported interstate".

NSW Poisons Information

Centre Medical Director, Associate Professor Darren Roberts, noted a preliminary investigation suggests that high levels of a naturally occurring chemical in the raw poppy seeds may be a factor, which needs to be well-cooked to be destroyed.

"We are urging anyone who has had large quantities of poppy seeds, for example as a drink, and who experiences any unusual and severe symptoms to seek immediate medical attention by visiting their nearest emergency department," he said.

Digital Health Record a boost for ACT

THE rollout of the ACT's territory-wide Digital Health Record (DHR) over the weekend will transform the way Canberrans receive hospital care, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) CEO, Kristin Michaels, believes.

"On behalf of the hospital pharmacy sector I congratulate the ACT on taking another giant leap on their electronic medical record (EMR) journey with the launch of the DHR," she said.

"Improvements and benefits to patient safety, quality of care

and timeliness of care have been clearly demonstrated by other jurisdictions and hospital networks around Australia that have implemented EMRs."

Michaels also backed the ACT Government's new eight-year ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030, which includes aims to improve hospital pharmacy services.

The plan would pave the way for ACT hospital patients to be discharged with a full month's supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medications and support safer use of medicines.

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Dispensary Corner

THE pandemic-induced shift to online learning has had a range of impacts - particularly for attractive female students whose grades have actually declined compared to when they attended class in person.

A new study reported in the journal *Economic Letters* has confirmed that good looking students tend to get better marks - but for females, this "beauty premium" disappears when classes are taught remotely.

The effect is only present in courses with significant student-teacher interaction, the researchers noted.

ASTHMA sufferers are rejoicing over the creation of a new genetically engineered houseplant which automatically clears the air of pollutants.

It's the brainchild of a French company called Neoplants, which recently released its new Neo P1 to the public.

The plant has been created by modifying a "devil's ivy" or "money plant" (*epipremnum aureum*) (pictured) and its root microbiome, with the makers saying it's about 30 times more efficient than a conventional air purifier in removing Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs) from the in-home atmosphere.



Global biosimilar push

THE International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (IGBA) is renewing its commitment to pushing for the establishment of worldwide biosimilar policies that deliver better health outcomes and biologics access equity for more patients.

The organisation has released a new paper, *Embracing science with confidence: Adopting the revised 2022 World Health Organization (WHO) biosimilar guideline*, to coincide with Global Biosimilars Week (14 to 18 Nov).

IGBA Biosimilars Committee Co-Chair, Julie Marechal-Jamil, said the paper aims to highlight the value of biosimilar medicines for patients, health professionals, governments and regulators.

"This paper highlights how the revised 2022 WHO Biosimilars Guideline provides clarity, consistency and confidence in state-of-the-art regulatory science for biosimilar medicines based on vast cumulated experience and over one million patient-treatment years of safety data in Europe alone," she said.

"We welcome this science-based



evolution of the WHO guideline as a driver for efficiency gains in biosimilar regulatory processes which we know will have a direct impact on the ability of patients to benefit from timely access to biologic therapies."

IGBA Chair, Vivian Frittelli, added that national regulatory authorities now needed to re-examine their requirements to boost biosimilar use around the world.

"If cohesively adopted, the WHO Guideline can promote efficient regulatory systems to provide patients with earlier access to safe, effective, quality-assured, and lower-cost biosimilar medicines," Frittelli said.

Fresh issues for Philips ventilators

PHILIPS Respironics has identified two new problems with its Trilogy 100 ventilators that have been "corrected" as part of a recall.

The latest issues impact the ventilators which have previously been repaired as part of the company's ongoing actions related to the PE-PUR sound abatement foam in these devices.

Philips has informed the Therapeutic Goods

Administration (TGA) that the new silicone sound abatement foam while was installed to replace the original foam may dislodge from its position and block the air pathway.

The manufacturer also reported that "trace amounts of particulate matter has been found in the air pathway of some corrected ventilators".

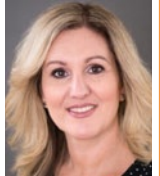
The latest issues do not impact corrected CPAP or BiPAP machines, the TGA reported.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Enza DiMauro**, Automation Specialist and Regional Sales Manager, Omnicell Australia.



Automated Dispensing Systems

EXPERIENCE in pharmacy automation for over 13 years has shown the level of confidence in benefits brought by automated dispensing and inventory management systems has grown considerably.

Pharmacists truly understand the value of utilising robots for the management of their dispensary medication.

Pharmacy is dominated by administrative tasks and streamlining these processes through automation helps remove this burden, freeing up pharmacy staff to manage the ever-increasing demands on community pharmacy.

With pharmacists becoming a bigger part of the healthcare system, automation gives you the opportunity to increase your focus on patient care and services. It allows pharmacists to deliver personalised consultation and drive sales of over-the-counter products and complimentary medication.

We have seen the increase in demands on pharmacy from the pandemic, now is the time to future proof your pharmacy to ensure you are ready for what comes next.