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CWH tops for service

DISCOUNT giant, Chemist Warehouse (CWH), has claimed the *Reader's Digest* Quality Service Awards 2023 Pharmacy title.

The group saw off the challenge of Symbion's TerryWhite Chemmart network, which came second in the poll of 2,500 Australians.

The survey addressed five criteria - personalisation, understanding, simplicity, satisfaction and consistency.

CWH Director, Mario Tascone, welcomed the public acknowledgement of the group's customer services.

"This award is a credit to our staff across Australia who have gone above and beyond to keep the doors open and provide service and products to our customers throughout the pandemic," he told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"It's great to have their efforts recognised."

Reader's Digest Editor-in-Chief, Louise Waterson, noted that the award winners across 38 categories, including pharmacy, had placed customers' needs at the centre of all business responses following the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This year has witnessed a greater focus and determination among



customer service teams to ensure their customers' needs, no matter how complex, are resolved quickly and with trouble-free solutions," Waterson said.

"For the award-winning businesses this means successfully delivering assistance in an innovative and savvy manner, while at the same time remaining approachable simply by upholding levels of kindness and understanding as central to assisting individual customers properly."

Today's issue of PD

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

Viatrix is rebranding. Many bottles will now be blue.



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Scope expansion to benefit GPs

EXPANDING pharmacists' scope of practice will alleviate the mounting pressure GPs are experiencing without impacting patient care, Pharmacy Guild of Australia Northern Territory Branch President, Peter Hatswell, believes.

Speaking on Mix 104.9, Hatswell said there was "every chance" that the Northern Territory Government would follow Queensland and NSW in authorising pharmacist prescribing for minor ailments and urinary tract infections (**PD 14 Nov**).

"The more states that come on board [with similar programs] the more likely that the NT will see it's working and it's proven," he said.

"The NT, Darwin and everywhere around have just as big a problem with getting to see a GP [as elsewhere in the country], and people are suffering as a result.

"They're ending up in Emergency and overwhelming the system."



Hatswell noted that GPs have repeatedly reported that they are overwhelmed with their current workload.

"Some [GPs] haven't had a day off in weeks and that's no way to work, and certainly that would lead to the potential of missing things or making mistakes, and we certainly don't want that to happen," he said.

"Everyone needs to have a good

and safe working environment and not being overworked is part of that."

"Doctors have a very important role in the healthcare of everybody in this nation, and this is going to help them to focus on what they're best at and take away the sort of nitty-gritty common stuff that can be handled by pharmacists quite safely and without any real problems."

UK pharmacists consider striking

HOSPITAL pharmacists in England and Wales are set to vote on industrial action in the coming days, over a proposed pay award.

The Unite union confirmed pharmacists working for the National Health Service (NHS) will be balloted in the lead up to Christmas, with the possibility that "workers could walk out in Jan 2023".

Unite Secretary General, Sharon Graham, said the union's members were "fighting for the very existence of the NHS itself".

"Crushing staff shortages mean patients' lives are now at risk," she said.

"Twelve years of senseless cuts have driven workers from our most essential public service."

New suppliers join PharmXchange

ADVANCED wound care expert Medstock, and sugar-free treat brand, Sugarless Confectionery are offering their products through Corum Group's PharmXchange platform.

The PharmX integrated system offers access to promotions and helps to reduce manual ordering and invoicing, while PharmXpay facilitates easy supplier payments.

The system operates in tandem with point-of-sale systems, cutting administrative tasks and



freeing up pharmacy staff to spend more time focused on servicing the needs of patients.

See **page four** for more.

Determination granted for COVID jab

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has granted a provisional determination for Pfizer's second bivalent COVID-19 vaccine candidate.

The vaccine comprises mRNA from both the original and Omicron BA4 and BA5 strains of COVID-19, and is proposed for use as a booster dose.

"The new provisional determination means that Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd is now able to apply for provisional registration

of this bivalent vaccine," the regulator said.

"Granting of the provisional determination precedes the provisional registration application and does not guarantee approval.

"If an application for provisional registration is made, Pfizer is required to submit data from human clinical trials to the TGA before any decision to provisionally approve the product could be made."

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Dispensary Corner

NOT even a trip to the Australian bush could spare former British Secretary of State for Health, Matthew Hancock, from his critics.

Hancock, who led Britain's COVID-19 response, until he was busted for breaching social distancing regulations when smooching an aide in a lift, has taken a break from political life to participate in the UK's *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here*.

Fellow contestant, Scarlett Douglas, took aim at Hancock's behaviour, describing it as "a slap in the face" for people who lived by the rules throughout the pandemic.

While Hancock has been feeling the heat from his camp mates, campaign group 38 Degrees has done its best to remind him that the British public are unimpressed by his performance, flying a message over the *I'm a Celebrity* camp saying, "COVID bereaved say get out of here!"

The group's CEO, Matthew McGregor, said the aerial campaign aimed to let the MP know the public's feelings.

"Our message emblazoned across the skies makes crystal clear to Matt Hancock [that] 'you should be representing the people of West Suffolk [in Parliament] and giving COVID bereaved families the answers they deserve, rather than playing games for dingo dollars,'" he said.

Hancock has told his camp colleagues that he is "really looking for a bit of forgiveness".

NPS will leave legacy beyond 2022

NPS MedicineWise will cease to exist on 31 Dec, but its legacy will live on, the organisation's CEO, Katherine Burchfield, believes.

Writing in the organisation's 2022 annual report, Burchfield said there was "much to celebrate" despite the disappointment of the Federal Government's decision to go ahead with plans to defund NPS MedicineWise.

"When I joined NPS MedicineWise in Oct 2021, I could see that the organisation was playing a valuable and valued role in the Australian health sector," she said.

"There was an unquestionable need for continued focus on the quality use of medicines (QUM) and other technologies nationally and NPS MedicineWise had a strong, unique capability and impact," she said.

"I was expecting some challenges, but it turned out to be a more challenging year than anyone anticipated.



"In Mar 2022, the organisation lost its Federal Government funding without warning, midway through a review of the National Medicines Policy.

"After unsuccessfully advocating with Government for a reversal of this move, the decision was made to wind up the organisation after 24 years of service to Australian health professionals and consumers.

"The programs that NPS

MedicineWise has delivered this year have been among the most valued and impactful in its history.

"Our track record demonstrates the success of this approach in achieving national policy objectives, improved prescribing and health outcomes, consumers as partners in their health care, and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and Medicare Benefits Schedule sustainability."

Pharmacist busts man with fake script

A SUNSHINE Coast man has been fined \$350 after a pharmacist noticed a prescription he had presented was forged.

Tobias James Martin pleaded guilty to using a forged document and receiving tainted property at a hearing of Maroochydore Magistrates Court yesterday, the *Courier Mail* reported.

Police prosecutor, Nick Nitschke, told the Court that Martin had used a prescription pad stolen from a local doctor's home in an effort to obtain medications.

However, the pharmacist

realised that the script was fraudulent and refused to fill it.

The pharmacist subsequently contacted the police, and the doctor confirmed that the 23-year-old was not one of his patients, and it was not his writing on the script.

Magistrate, Kurt Fowler, said Martin's actions undermined the reliance pharmacists place on receiving prescriptions, and warned that his behaviour was "fraught with danger".

Despite entering a guilty plea, the 23-year-old avoided having a conviction recorded against him, but was handed a \$350 fine for his actions.

Opioid deal fears

MULTI-BILLION dollar settlements made by a trio of US pharmacy giants over their role in the opioid crisis, could have repercussions for independent pharmacies.

Montana-based pharmacy owner, Kyle Austin, told KTVQ that the deals would have a ripple effect, creating more rules and barriers to accessing opioid medications.

"We're going to have less access to the medications people need and patients that need the medications are going to have more struggles and more barriers to get them," he said.



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