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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features four pages of news plus a full page from TerryWhite Chemmart.

## Invest in people

**PHARMACY** owners who join the TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) can gain access to comprehensive staff training through its Academy Live, Retail Leaders Forum and Masterclass programs.

TWC also offers network members operational support and a dedicated health development team led by chief pharmacist, Brenton Hart, plus an annual national conference and state-based regional events, which provide business updates and networking opportunities for pharmacy owners and managers.

See **page five** for more.

# CWH seeks freedom to discount Rx

**PHARMACIES** should be given the freedom to lower the prices they charge for Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listed medicines beyond the dollar discount, Chemist Warehouse (CWH) Chief Operating Officer, Mario Tascone, believes.

With the reduction in the PBS general co-payment set to come into effect from 01 Jan 2023, a number of medications with a list price of less than \$42.50 and subject to competition will have a price above the \$30 co-payment, making them theoretically ineligible for discounting.

However, *Pharmacy Daily* understands that existing discounts will be grandfathered, allowing pharmacies to maintain discounts that exceed the controversial \$1 discount.

Under the proposed model discounted medicines will contribute to a patient's safety net, but the pharmacy will not receive a subsidy.

Speaking with *News Corp*, Tascone called on the Federal



Government to amend legislation to allow pharmacies to offer greater discounts to patients.

"We offer free prescriptions in New Zealand because we are allowed to discount the co-payment off," he said.

"We would like to choose what we can discount the co-payment to here, and if the rules changed for certain drugs we would forfeit the co-payment.

"We might be able to do some

things for free.

"We might be able to do some things for \$5 - we want that flexibility."

Consumer Health Forum CEO, Elizabeth Deveny, said discounting would only benefit patients who can access discount pharmacies.

"It would be unfair if all Australians, especially those living in rural and remote areas, could not access such discounted medicines via their local pharmacy," she said.



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## Pharmacy workforce plan needed

AUSTRALIA needs to develop a long-term plan to address ongoing workforce shortages in the pharmacy sector, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) believes.

With the latest National Skills Commission Skills Priority List (PD 07 Oct) reporting there are shortages of both hospital and community pharmacists across all jurisdictions, SHPA CEO, Kristen Michaels, said a national strategy was needed.

"We must not lose the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which it was plain to see that beds, ventilators and vials are meaningless if we do not have enough specialist, experienced healthcare workers behind them," she said.

"Despite the hospital pharmacy workforce growing by about 50% nationally in the last decade, our sector is still recognised as [being] in shortage as demand for hospital pharmacists' expertise has far outstripped growth.

"Our medical colleagues and



allied health colleagues know how important hospital pharmacists are to improving medication safety, facilitating patient flow through our crowded Emergency Departments and inpatient wards, and improving our healthcare systems capacity.

"Beyond the provision of medicines, the 'four walls' that surround hospital pharmacy are changing, and the specialised skills of hospital pharmacists are leading a

growing number of interdisciplinary stewardship services to better meet the needs of some of Australia's most vulnerable patients.

"In addition to their invaluable clinical skills, specialist hospital pharmacists have been proven to reduce medication-related harms, optimise medication use, decrease hospital length of stay and reduce readmissions and their associated Medicare costs."

## COVID scams

AUSTRALIANS are being warned not to share personal information with people calling from a number that appears to be a Department of Health and Aged Care hotline.

In a statement released on Fri, the Department said it does not make outgoing calls from the number - 02 6289 1555, and urged members of the public to report any calls from the number to Scamwatch.

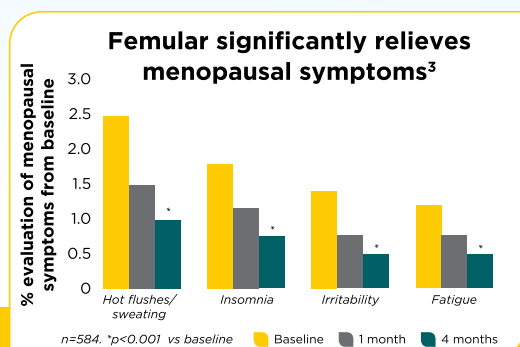
The Department noted that people who have received these calls have reported that scammers have accused people of leaking information about COVID-19, alerted them that their identity has been stolen, claimed that they have breached COVID-19 rules, or "asked for donations for coronavirus".

Investigations are ongoing, the Department reported.



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\*#1 selling non-prescription menopause relief product in Switzerland. References: 1. Lopatka L et al, Journal of Menopause 2007; 2:16-21.  
2. IQVIA, national sales data Switzerland, sell-in (Pharmacy, Drugstore, Self-dispensing Doctors), turnover (ex-factory) in CHF, MAT June 2021.





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### Waiting too long

**DELAYS** at a Dutch GP clinic and pharmacy left one patient so frustrated he drove his car into the store.

Police arrested the 42-year-old at a pharmacy in Culemborg, just south of the city of Utrecht.

GP, Dr Freek van den Heuvel, reported that the man stormed out of the pharmacy after being asked to "take a number and wait his turn".

"He got into his car and drove into the pharmacy," van den Heuvel said.

"Then he got out of his car and walked out again.

"We are increasingly confronted with angry and aggressive people at the counter.

"It was probably not meant personally, but if a fuse goes off, then we have to deal with it at the counter."

## Quality assurance systems critical: FIP

**THE** International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has launched its guiding principles for quality assurance of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences education.

In its new policy statement, FIP said quality assurance systems should be based on standards that recognise political, legal, social, economic and cultural contexts, and the potential advancements in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences education.

FIP's Quality Assurance of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Education Policy Committee Chair, Dr Banan Abdulrzaq Mukhalalati, said quality assurance was important for maintaining the quality of education in order to support the development of an adequate and appropriate pharmaceutical workforce.

"Ultimately, radical improvements in the availability and quality of



the workforce are only possible if the higher education and health sectors collaboratively implement a transformative education agenda grounded in continuous quality improvement, competency-based learning, and quality academic and institutional infrastructure," Mukhalalati said.

The new policy statement, which updates a 2009 FIP policy on this topic, also makes specific recommendations for FIP member

organisations, pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences academic institutions, and providers of continuing professional development.

In addition, it outlines the commitments of FIP in this area, including developing key performance indicators to measure the implementation of the workforce element of FIP Development Goal Three (Quality assurance).

### Pharmacy services need to match ED

**NSW** hospital emergency departments (ED) need to have access to round-the-clock pharmacy services, experts believe.

Addressing the *Inquiry into the impact of ambulance ramping and access block on the operation of emergency departments in NSW*, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital Senior Staff Specialist, Clare Skinner, said the ED was seeing patients present with "increasingly complex problems".

"The emergency department is open 24 hours a day," she said.

"Part of the problem we have is that the rest of the hospital, excluding some services, go down to skeletal staff, many of those other services after 4.30 in the afternoon."

Skinner said that if she saw a patient in the ED "they need to see a pharmacist to have their medication sorted out before they can go home", but outside business hours patients were not able to be discharged.

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## Dispensary Corner

**LEGENDARY** bat-eating Black Sabbath frontman, Ozzy Osbourne, is branching into the world of cosmetics with a new collection of eye shadows and lipsticks.

The Buckinghamshire-based Prince of Darkness has partnered with Rock and Roll Beauty to create the new line of cosmetics.

The Ozzy Osbourne Collection is being rolled out in the wake of the star's return to the stage at this year's Commonwealth Games opening ceremony, which was held in his hometown of Birmingham, and the release of his latest album, *Patient Number 9*.

The cosmetic collection features 21 separate Ozzy-inspired pieces, including eye shadows in coffin and bat-shaped palettes, a Gothic mirror, body tattoos, nail stickers, lipsticks, and the vegan-friendly Ozzy Bark at the Moon Highlighter - so there's something for everyone.

## No jail for smash 'n' grab

**TOMAHAWK-WIELDING** bandit, Jamahl Ian Thomas Harradine, will avoid time behind bars for his part in a burglary of an Adelaide pharmacy.

The 21-year-old was handed a 28-month sentence, which was suspended on a 12-month, \$500 good behaviour bond, after he pleaded guilty to two counts of criminal trespass and theft, *The Adelaide Advertiser* reported.

A District Court of South Australia hearing was told that Harradine and two others had broken into a house in the early hours of 05 Aug 2021, where they stole the homeowner's wallet, a purse and their car.

An hour later he then smashed his way into a Mile End pharmacy using a tomahawk, where he and his accomplices pilfered a number of boxes of Lyrica.

At the sentencing hearing last week, Judge Paul Muscat noted that Harradine had lost his way after some significant events in his life.

"Your life fell apart," the judge said.

"You then started using drugs and mixing with some people you shouldn't have."

Judge Muscat urged the 21-year-old to embrace the opportunity to



avoid spending time behind bars and prove that he has learnt from his experience of going before the court.

"You can do that by becoming a good member of your community, learning your culture and getting back into football next season, and most importantly, staying clear of drugs and not mixing with the wrong crowd," he said.

"There will be serious consequences for you should you break the law."

The court heard that Harradine had apologised to the victims of his crimes.

## Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Amit Saha, M-Pharm, MBA, MPS- Pharmacist and Group Technical Manager, LaCorium Health.**



### Magnesium Myth in Cramping

**"IT IS unlikely that magnesium supplementation provides clinically meaningful cramp prophylaxis to older adults experiencing skeletal muscle cramps"**.

This is not my word, it is taken directly from the author's conclusion section of a Cochrane review on magnesium for skeletal muscle cramp (Garrison et al, Sept 2020). Yet many of us in the pharmacy setting recommend magnesium supplements for the relief and prophylaxis of muscle cramp, which is unlikely to have any clinical significance.

While magnesium is an essential element for human functioning, its use for cramping is purely due to unavailability of a pharmaceutical treatment for skeletal muscle cramping indication in my opinion, and not supported by clinical data.

The exact cause of skeletal muscle cramp is hard to ascertain, as such a multi-combination therapy as opposed to a singular ingredient approach is likely to be more successful.

A treatment plan which combines magnesium with an antispasmodic such as viburnum opulus, a circulation booster and few essential B vitamins has more likelihood of achieving better clinical outcome in the treatment and prophylaxis of skeletal muscle cramping.

### Holy pharmacist

**FORMER** hospital pharmacist, Artemide Zatti, has been canonised as a saint by Pope Francis over the weekend.

The Argentine was described by the Pontiff as "a living example of gratitude" at a ceremony, where Zatti and Italian Bishop of Piacenza, Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, were named as saints.

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\*PPA Community and Hospital Pharmacists Employment and Remuneration report 2019-20

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