



Today's issue of PD

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

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BRAND Solutions Australia has an Apr deal for Gluco Beans. Get 10% off when you buy five cartons or more for this fast-growing brand. See more on the **back page**.

AMA's latest push

THE Australian Medical Association (AMA) today launched its *You deserve more* campaign, highlighting the "flaws in the go-it-alone pharmacy-prescribing models". The campaign outlines solutions to access and affordability issues without putting people's health and safety at risk, the AMA stated.

Bayer class action starts

CLASS action proceedings brought against the manufacturers and distributors of Essure, a permanent female contraceptive device, have commenced in the Supreme Court of Victoria, which includes Bayer entities.

A Bayer statement said, "the health and safety of the patients who rely on our products is our greatest priority."

"We have great sympathy for anyone who has experienced health problems while using any of our products, regardless of cause."

Women have reported side effects experienced as extreme pain to extremely heavy bleeding - that has often left them bedridden.

The company statement said it believes it has "strong defences" and will continue to defend itself vigorously in Court.

"We are confident that the evidence, in this case, will demonstrate the company is not responsible for the alleged injuries." Bayer stopped selling Essure in

2017 but states it stands behind the safety and efficacy of Essure which it claims is supported by an extensive body of research (including 10 clinical trials and over 70 real-world observational studies), undertaken by Bayer and independent medical researchers, involving more than 270,000 women over the past two decades.

The statement added that "women who currently have Essure in place may continue to confidently rely on the device." "If a woman with Essure has concerns or questions about the device, she is encouraged to discuss these with her healthcare provider."

Law firm Slater and Gordon took on the class action three years ago.

It will be up to a judge to decide the fate of the 1,000 Australian women in Victoria's Supreme Court.

The civil trial is expected to run for three months.

Bayer has already settled a similar claim in the US in 2020, paying out nearly US\$1.6b (A\$2.4b).

Dual labels to end

DUAL labelling ends for most ingredient names on 30 Apr and enters a transition period towards showing only new names on medicine labels, the TGA has reminded.

A small set of ingredient names will continue with dual labelling.

After this date, for most names, labels can show the new ingredient name only, or continue with both names while work is done to change the label, TGA said.

Medicine sponsors have three years to update labels to show only the new name.

For example, labels of medicines containing 'lidocaine (lignocaine)' will need to be updated to show 'lidocaine'.

The transition period for most dual labelled ingredients starts on 01 May and ends on 30 Apr 2026, and from 01 May 2026 medicines must show the sole name, the TGA reported.

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CW raises \$1m for Save Our Sons charity

CHEMIST Warehouse (CW) has raised \$1m for Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophy charity, Save Our Sons, for its 2023 campaign.

Save Our Sons is for those living with Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophy and was founded in 2008 by Elie and Nancy Eid after their son, Emilio was diagnosed with Duchenne.

CW has been a major charity partner of Save Our Sons since 2016 supporting their annual Walk 4 Duchenne which this year took place in Queensland and saw Elie and a team of walkers journey from Brisbane to the Gold Coast.

The funds were raised via a massive in-store fundraising initiative throughout the CW network last month.

"We at Save Our Sons are humbled by the kindness, generosity, and support from Chemist Warehouse who have raised \$1m for this year's

Walk4Duchenne," Founder Elie Eid said.

"What an amazing organisation and extraordinary people.

"Beyond awareness for the Duchenne and Becker community this donation will allow us to grow and continue to support the vital work funding nurses and specialists in our hospitals, research, and advocacy as well as access to resources, services and better care for our families."

CW Director Mario Tascone said, "over the last eight years, CW has been proud to raise funds and awareness for the vital work conducted by Save Our Sons and we are ecstatic with the amount raised during the 2023 campaign.

"Within the CW family, we have experienced the diagnoses of Duchenne and we remain committed and passionate about standing alongside Save Our Sons as they take on this cruel disease in any way they can."

Amcal's best rise ahead



LAST week, NSW's Salamander Bay pharmacists Christian Hernandez, Liam Keating, Andrew Ratley, and Ralph Kaiko (pictured) shaved their heads as part of fundraising efforts for one of their patients Jasmin Kaschan.

Kaschan, also affectionately known as Jazzy, is a local mum with two toddlers.

She was diagnosed with stage

four breast cancer late last year and was recently told that the cancer has spread to her brain.

To further raise funds and awareness about cancer, the Amcal pharmacist decided to shave their heads on 05 Apr - Jazzy's 23rd birthday.

All money raised will go directly to Jazzy for medical, petrol and living expenses.

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Dispensary Corner

ACTIVISTS in Florida are urging authorities to upgrade wastewater systems, after fish in the Tampa Bay area were found to contain multiple types of prescription medication.

The controversy has erupted in light of a new study from Florida International University, which caught over 110 “redfish” across the course of a year and then analysed the creatures.

On average three pharmaceutical drugs were found in the bloodstream of each fish, with a spokesperson for the Tampa Bay Water Keeper group saying the results mean “our fish are literally on drugs”.

“This is essentially yelling at us that we need to reinvest in our water infrastructure, and in this case our wastewater infrastructure,” he said.

The most commonly detected medications in the fish included cardiovascular drugs, opioids and psychoactive substances, with antiarrhythmic drug flecainide and opioid tramadol detected in more than half of the fish tested.

The study’s authors noted that pharmaceutical contaminants most often originate from human wastewater, and are not sufficiently removed by conventional treatment systems.

“They remain active at low doses...and exposure can affect all aspects of fish behaviour, with negative consequences for their reproduction & survival.”

A significant proportion of the state’s economy is based on recreational fishing, which supports over 120,000 jobs.

Flu vax for priority groups

PRIORITY groups are encouraged to book in now for their free influenza vaccine, ahead of the flu season.

NSW Health said that pharmacists can urge everyone aged six months and over to get their influenza vaccine as soon as possible, but it is particularly important for those at higher risk of severe illness from the virus.

The influenza vaccine is free for priority groups, including children aged six months to under five years, people aged 65 and over, Aboriginal people from six months of age, pregnant women and those with serious health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, immune disorders, obesity, severe asthma, kidney, heart, lung or liver disease.

NSW Premier Chris Minns explained that “influenza is highly contagious and can be deadly for some people, so if you are in one of these priority groups, please take advantage of the free flu vaccine as soon as possible”.

NSW Health Minister Ryan Park

said influenza vaccines are available through GPs for any age group, as well as through pharmacies for everyone aged five years and over.

“When people book, they should ask their pharmacist or GP if they are eligible for a free flu vaccine.

“There is plenty of stock available throughout the state, so now is the time to book your shot,” Park said.

NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant said it is difficult to predict the full impact of the flu season ahead, but vaccination is the way to ensure you are protected.

“If you are aged 65 and over, or at higher risk of severe illness, we also recommend you receive a 2023 COVID-19 vaccine booster, as both flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time,” Chant said.

NSW Health said all adults can get a 2023 COVID-19 vaccine booster if it’s been six months or longer since their last COVID-19 booster or confirmed infection (whichever is most recent) for additional protection against severe illness from COVID-19.

Spotlight on poisonings by paracetamol

POISONINGS by modified release (MR) paracetamol when up-scheduled to S3 were analysed in a new study in last month’s *The Medical Journal of Australia*.

The study evaluated whether re-scheduling was associated with changes in the numbers of overdoses with MR paracetamol, immediate-release paracetamol, and other OTC analgesics reported to the New South Wales Poisons Information Centre to the end of Aug 2022.

The study assessed changes in monthly overdose numbers using interrupted time series analysis.

Researchers found that poisonings with MR paracetamol did not significantly decline after its re-scheduling as an S3 medicine.

The number was increasing prior to re-scheduling, and continued to do so subsequently.

The increase in overdoses with ibuprofen and other OTC analgesics may indicate that people were switching analgesics; as MR paracetamol is more toxic than non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, this would be consistent with harm reduction, the researchers said

Learn more **HERE**.



Guild Update

New report boosts case for affordable medicines

THE latest journal edition by the Australian Healthcare and Hospital Association (AHHA) has boosted the case for the Pharmacy Guild’s ‘Affordable Medicines Now’ campaign.

The AHHA’s latest edition of the *Australian Health Review* says the high cost of medicines acts as a barrier for Australians wanting to maintain their health.

Guild National president, Trent Twomey, says this is the main reason for rebooting the ‘Affordable Medicines Now’ campaign.

“The *Australian Health Review* tells us precisely what our community pharmacists are reporting back from the frontline of healthcare.

“It doesn’t matter whether it’s communities in Canberra or Cairns, the feedback is the same. Too many Australians are struggling with the cost of medicines,” he said.

The AHHA says the journal article, *Policy Reflections* authored by Jane Hall and Stephen Duckett, examines Australia’s healthcare system and the growing and changing health needs of the country.

“As well as people delaying essential healthcare due to cost, affordability is a barrier when it comes to medications.

“Our campaign is ‘Affordable Medicines Now’. The Federal Government needs to act now,” Twomey said.

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