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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features two pages of news, plus a cover wrap from **TerryWhite Chemmart** and a full page from **BioCeuticals**.

## Offering choice

**TERRYWHITE** Chemmart's infrastructure, processes, implementation, and follow through are better than others making it easier to be dedicated to patient care, say its partners. See more on the **cover page**.

## Travel medication

**BIOCEUTICALS** SB Floractiv is probiotic support that will help reverse the symptoms of traveller's diarrhoea in both adults and children, and to top it all it's fridge-free, making it a suitable travel medication. See more on the **back page**.

# Pain galore with more meds shortages

**THE** Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has warned of a looming health crisis for palliative care patients of all ages as well as those with chronic pain, cancer and other conditions requiring effective pain control with critical acute pain medications in dire shortage.

Key health bodies including Palliative Care Australia (PCA), the Australian & New Zealand Society for Palliative Medicine, SHPA and Palliative Care Nurses Australia have written to the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler detailing their concerns around forecast medicine shortages and reduced access to necessary and vital pain relief.

The joint letter to Butler puts forward several actions to address the risks to the community and reduce the impact of these decisions now and in the future.

"This is a serious risk for all Australians requiring management of serious pain," cautioned CEO of

PCA Camilla Rowland.

"These discontinuations and shortages threaten the safe delivery of quality care for vulnerable patients like young children and those with a cancer diagnosis.

"Not to mention the tremendous anxiety these announcements continue to cause clinicians, patients, and carers."

"The cost of alternatives sourced from overseas to replace locally registered medicines is almost always higher, and this can be a barrier for many people and health services," Rowland added.

SHPA President Tom Simpson explained, "the cost of alternatives sourced from overseas to replace locally registered medicines is almost always higher, and this can be a barrier for many people and health services.

"There is no guarantee that the alternative product will be subsidised by PBS either which can easily quadruple the cost of the

discontinued Australian-registered product," he commented.

"Working with our partners in the TGA's Medicines Shortage Action Group and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee we have been able to move the dial, but action is now required at the highest levels of govt to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community can access their human right to care and quality of life," said Rowland.

"We stand ready to play our part in finding solutions to ensure no patient in need goes without."

Earlier this year, pharma company Mundipharma announced it was removing liquid morphine Ordine from the Australian market.

In late Oct, the company flagged that another nine products containing morphine or oxycodone would be discontinued over the coming 18 months including OxyNorm caps, MS Mono caps, and Sevredol tabs. *JG*

## Another TGA SSSI

**A SHORTAGE** of Zactin Tabs (fluoxetine hydrochloride 20mg dispersible tablets) will affect supply until the end of Feb 2024, the TGA has reported.

To minimise the effect of this shortage on patients and healthcare professionals, the TGA has implemented the Therapeutic Goods (Serious Scarcity and Substitutable Medicine) (Fluoxetine) Instrument 2023.

This instrument allows pharmacists to dispense fluoxetine 10mg or 20mg capsule products using an existing prescription for fluoxetine 20mg dispersible tablets without prior permission from the prescriber, so long as specific conditions are met, the TGA has recommended.

## WA expands access to NIP vaccines

**THE** West Australian Govt has moved to expand the schedule of pharmacist-administered vaccines following the expansion of National Immunisation Program (NIP) funding.

From 01 Jan 2024, the updated *Administration of Vaccines by Pharmacists SASA* will allow pharmacists to administer an expanded schedule of funded NIP vaccines to West Australians aged five years and over.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) WA President Kristian Ray encouraged pharmacists to participate in the expanded program.

"Allowing more people to

be vaccinated by their local pharmacist is a vital step in not only protecting individuals but the entire community.

"Releasing the updated SASA early means that pharmacists across our state and across practice areas can prepare for expanded services," said Ray.

PSA has strongly advocated for a patient-centred approach, allowing pharmacists practising to their full potential to deliver accessible care to communities.

"For pharmacists this is not only an opportunity to provide more vaccination services but also to drive public health messaging, encouraging vaccine uptake."

## Irish superstore

**AUSTRALIAN** pharmacy retailer Chemist Warehouse has relocated and expanded its first-ever Irish store in Blanchardstown, Dublin, this week, to more than double the size of the original store, sitting at a huge 1,000sqm\*.

Anne Rizzica, COO, Chemist Warehouse Ireland said, "the one-stop shop variety of products has proved a perfect match for Irish customers.

"It is an exciting milestone to be opening the doors to our first superstore in the country bringing us to a total of eight stores in Ireland to date."

The store will open seven days per week.

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## Dispensary Corner

**SALADS** are good for health, but a man's refusal to eat his greens has resulted in him missing out on a £50 (A\$96) prize for completing a 4,500-calorie mixed grill challenge at a restaurant in the UK.

Food lover Dan came so close, yet so far, at Cattleman's Steakhouse in Paignton, Devon, where he devoured a 566gm rump steak, 340gm of gammon, four sausages, three chicken wings, a chicken breast and a 170gm cheeseburger as part of a competition that gives contenders one hour to clear their plates, reported *Metro News* last week.

He managed to polish off the lot, but his dislike of salad leaves and cucumber - easily the least calorific items on the plate - saw him disqualified.

Furious TikTok users slammed the restaurant, but others said Dan, who did not wish to share his surname, should simply 'grow up' and eat his greens.

A viewer named Liam Rose wrote, "for the sake of 50 quid you should have just grown up and ate it!"

The backlash has been such that Cattleman's has now invited Dan back to have another go at the monster meal, which also contains eggs, chips, onion rings, and fried mushrooms.

By not eating the entire smorgasbord, Dan not only missed out on the \$96 prize - he also had to pay the equivalent amount for the meal.

But the restaurant claims he was aware of the terms and "is happy with the outcome".

## Forced closure fears in SA

**ICONIC** Adelaide business Midnight Pharmacy is facing fears of forced closure following SA Premier Peter Malinauskas' 24/7 pharmacy announcement last week, according to its owner.

While much of the state has welcomed the significant enhancement to local healthcare accessibility, Midnight Pharmacy owner Peter Angelos (pictured) said he's "devastated" by what it will mean for his business.

Angelos said his pharmacy will be competing with two Chemist Warehouse stores and a National Pharmacies outlet offering after-hours services next year.

"It'll kill my business," he told *The Advertiser* yesterday.

He claimed Adelaide lacks the demand for three 24/7 pharmacies, and is certain the increased services, buoyed by \$2.5 million per year in state government funding, will send him "down the gurgler" despite surviving through COVID and the cost-of-living crisis.

"It'll certainly affect our business, and we've been here for the last 30 years," he said, asserting around-the-clock pharmacy services weren't viable in the state.

It will impact all the single owner pharmacies, he commented.

"We've attempted a couple of times to stay open (24/7), and after about midnight, there's hardly anyone around.

"I just don't think we've got the population to support it."

Angelos said there was also a "lack of transparency" surrounding funding provided by the govt and that was why he did not submit an application for the tender.

"I made a couple of attempts to contact the offices of the govt tender, but I wasn't provided with accurate information about what



the funding would be," he said.

"I couldn't see how we would be able to afford it.

"I only found out this week from one of my staff members that it was \$2.5 million."

He remarked that learning that millions of dollars were being allocated to three major group pharmacies was "a kick in the guts".

"It's a political stunt to use taxpayer's money to fund corporates who are providing services that already exist, and who will basically be funded by us now, instead of supporting pharmacies that were already open until midnight," he said.

Responding to Angelos' concerns, Health Minister Chris Picton reiterated the State Government's intentions in extending community pharmacy services.

"The State Govt is delivering on its election commitment to support three 24/7 pharmacies because there is a need in the community," Picton explained in a statement.

"There is no legal impediment to pharmacies operating 24/7, but currently SA has none.

"The three 24/7 pharmacies were selected through an open, competitive tender process, and all pharmacies which met the tender requirements were encouraged to submit their interest." JG

## Guild Update

### New report on migration and pharmacy

**MANY** industries are reliant on migration to address the worker and skills shortage in Australia and community pharmacy is not immune.

That's why the Pharmacy Guild has released the new *Migration Report* as part of its *Workforce Capability Project*.

The report follows a comprehensive analysis of migration and how it can address current vacancy rates in community pharmacy and improve productivity.

Among the key findings of the report are:

- 74% of pharmacies are experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff.
- Around 18% of pharmacy employers say recruitment is the biggest challenge they are facing.
- Rural and regional pharmacies have the most difficulty in meeting the population's needs because of the workforce shortage.
- The proportion of part-time to full-time pharmacists in community pharmacy is "significantly unbalanced" compared to other industries.
- A large number of internationally-trained pharmacists have applied for Australian registration.

Members can download a copy of the *Migration Report* **HERE** under the 'Latest Reports' section on the Guild website.

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