

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus a full page from TerryWhite Chemmart.

## Extends supply

WELLNEX Life Limited has extended its Supply Agreement with Haleon into the UK, Ireland and the United Arab Emirates, for its soft gel liquid paracetamol.

Director Zack Bozinovski shared that "this Agreement extension highlights the scale benefits of Wellnex's business model of developing innovative products, intellectual property and accelerating distribution via significant partnership arrangements".

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## New NAPSA leadership

THE National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) has a new leadership team.

Following NAPSA's recent AGM meeting held at RMIT in Melbourne over the weekend, the newly appointed President is Bano Serhan (pictured).

Serhan is in her third year of a Bachelor of Pharmacy (Honours) at the University of Newcastle, NSW.

She will join the NAPSA Board alongside the seven also newly elected Executive Directors who are as follows - Sebastian Harper, Griffith University, Gage Ede and Shylee-Jade Hadar-Pagliari, James Cook University, Harrison Vo, University of Sydney, McKinley Nolan, University of Tasmania, and Ingrid Stroud, University of Canberra.

Serhan acknowledged the work of her predecessor Flynn Swift and shared, "Flynn has offered

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incredible knowledge and insight over the past 12 months and I am grateful for his support as I step into the role of the National President".

"It is a privilege to be elected alongside such a highly qualified and dedicated team of Executive Directors.

"I am very excited to work with the Board to continue advancing the excellent work that NAPSA does for our members."

## Novartis deal

NOVARTIS will divest 'front of eye' ophthalmology assets to Bausch + Lomb, in a transaction valued up to US\$2.5 billion (A\$3.74 billion), including US\$1.75 billion (A\$2.62 billion) in upfront cash, plus additional milestone payments, with the closing of the deal later this year.

The deal includes Xiidra, the first approved prescription treatment for the signs and symptoms of dry eye disease, and investigational medicine SAF312 (libvatrep), in development as a first-in-class therapy for chronic ocular surface pain, as well as the rights for use of the AcuStream delivery device in dry eye indications and OJL332, a second generation TRPV1 antagonist in pre-clinical development.

## RACGP support

THE Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) supports the "significant financial boost" for pharmacies, which took effect from 01 Jul (PD 03 Jul).

RACGP President Dr Nicole Higgins said, "Australia needs a strong and sustainable primary care system with GPs working together with pharmacists... as community pharmacies play an important role in dispensing medication.

"They also provide various associated services, such as opioid dependence treatment, medication reviews, and Indigenous health, which are government subsidised.

"The significant financial boost to pharmacies from 01 Jul is welcome, particularly for those in our rural communities.

"The regional pharmacy maintenance allowance has doubled, so pharmacies in the most remote areas are now eligible for more than \$90,000 a year to keep their doors open," Higgins said.

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**References:** 1. Grieve KA, Barnes TM. Increased bioavailability of hydrocortisone dissolved in a cream base. *Australas J Dermatol*. 2015; 56(2):e30-4. 2. Van Zuuren EJ, Fedorowicz Z, Christensen R, Lavrijsen APM, Arents BWM (2017) Emollients and moisturisers for eczema. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2017, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD012119. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD012119.pub2.

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## Dispensary Corner

**AUSTRALIA'S** track record providing healthcare in extreme and remote environments will help space agency NASA's ambitions to reach Mars.

From selecting suitable candidates to helping astronauts transition back to gravity on Earth, Australian researchers and doctors are paving the way for humankind's next foray into space.

"No one in the world does rural healthcare as well as we do, and no one in the world does Antarctic healthcare as well as we do," said Dr John Cherry, a rural medicine specialist and director of the Australasian Society of Aerospace Medicine at Sydney's Kolling Institute.

"Utilising that experience and that knowledge is going to be key to keeping astronauts safe, from a medical point of view, as they venture deeper into space."

The selected candidates will be given medical and technical training to help them deal with everything from medical emergencies to the daily rigours of space on the body.

"Not every astronaut who goes into space is going to be a medical doctor - far from it," said Cherry.

Dr Gordon Cable, a specialist in aerospace medicine whose Adelaide-based startup is developing a post-flight "G-suit" to help astronauts transition back to gravity said, "on Mars, there isn't a welcoming committee, there are no doctors and physios to help you transition - you've got to do it all yourself".

## Taking the 'pulse' of pay

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia is asking for expressions of interest from members of the pharmacy workforce for the 2023/24 financial year Remuneration Survey.

The Guild says its survey will take the "pulse of pay rates" this Aug, and is part of the Pharmacy Guild's Workforce Capability Project.

This survey the Guild feels will help it to "understand factors driving workforce shortages and improvements community pharmacy can make to attract and maintain a skilled workforce".

Pharmacy Guild National President Trent Twomey says the survey is a "great way for the Guild and its members to understand the needs of the workforce".

"By participating you are not only helping your own business to stay competitive but also giving the pharmacy industry an insight into workforce evolution and business sustainability," explained Twomey.



"The survey is open to both members and non-members alike to participate," he added.

The Guild stated that everyone who participates will also be given an advanced copy of the survey.

The Guild has just published the 2022/23 *Remuneration Report* after gathering data for this past financial year for participants.

Express your interest in the survey before 16 Jul, [HERE](#).

## PBS drug listings

**ELIGIBILITY** criteria for the COVID-19 oral antiviral treatment nirmatrelvir and ritonavir (Paxlovid) will be further expanded on the PBS to include individuals aged 50-59 years with one known risk factor.

The change will ensure greater access to Paxlovid for people who are at risk of severe disease.

The PBS eligibility criteria for molnupiravir (Lagevrio) remains unchanged.

Avatrombopag (Doptelet) is also now listed on the PBS for the first time to treat severe thrombocytopenia in patients with chronic idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura.

## Dry eye impacts

**DEPRESSION** can exacerbate the symptoms of chronic dry eye, according to the 'Association Between Depression and Severity of Dry Eye Symptoms, Signs, and Inflammatory Markers in the DREAM Study' published in *JAMA Ophthalmology*, [HERE](#).

The study found that those who screened positive for depression generally had worse dry eye symptoms.

Depression changes lifestyle habits, such as spending more time in front of a computer or TV, said the study's researchers.

This can lead to dry eyes or worsen your depression.

But it goes both ways, as dry eyes can hurt mental health.

## Guild Update

### ODT concerns raised with Minister

**PHARMACY** Guild National President Trent Twomey has expressed concerns over the government's Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT) policy in a letter to Federal Health Minister Mark Butler.

In the letter, Twomey explains the Guild's concern at the speed of the policy's implementation and that, "ongoing patient access is threatened by impending market failure of the program".

The letter also spells out a lack of consultation and that the policy has a funding shortfall of \$41 million and is funded by, "cuts to pharmacies' dispensing income".

The letter follows seven occasions in which the same concerns were expressed verbally to both the Minister and the Department.

### NIP vax addition

**THE** Vaxelis paediatric hexavalent vaccine is now available on the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

Vaxelis is indicated for primary vaccination in infants from six weeks of age, helping to provide protection against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B, poliomyelitis and invasive diseases caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib).

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