

## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

### 1,000 on UTI trial

FROM today the NSW government's \$3 million prescribing trial, launched in May, has expanded from 94 to 1,000 pharmacies.

Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant said the two-month "feasibility period" had shown the scheme led by the University of Newcastle was "popular and improved access to primary care", with almost 900 consultations recorded.

"More women with uncomplicated UTIs will be able to visit their nearest participating pharmacy and receive advice, and where appropriate, be dispensed medication for their UTI, and information [will be] provided to their usual GP to support integrated primary care."

## Transition payments to ease the pain

THE Govt is investing \$148.2m in regional, rural and remote pharmacies to offset 60DD revenue reduction, said Federal Health Minister Mark Butler (pictured) at this weekend's PSA23 conference.

"This new transition payment will provide additional support for more than 1,000 pharmacies in regional, rural and remote Australia.

"Pharmacies hold a special place in rural and regional Australia - they're a critical part of the fabric of a community and are often the most accessible health setting.

"We want to make sure that regional and rural pharmacies are given the opportunity to seize these new growth opportunities, just like city pharmacies.

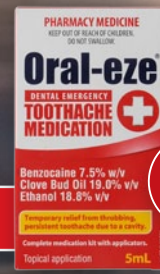
"The four-year funding, which begins on 01 Sep, will help pharmacies adjust to the transition to 60-day prescriptions," he shared.

Pharmacies in regional, rural and remote Australia, or areas two to seven under the Modified Monash classification method, with average

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script volumes equalling dispensing income of under \$1 million in the 12 months to 01 Apr, will be eligible to receive a new Regional Pharmacy Transition Allowance, stated a government statement.

The transition allowance is additional support over four years of \$52,030 in a regional centre or outer suburb (MM2); \$396,909 in a large rural town (MM3); \$344,697 in a medium rural town (MM4); \$338,477 in a small rural town (MM5); \$213,391 in a remote community (MM6); and \$198,263 for a very remote community (MM7).

The new allowance is in addition to the "doubling" of the Regional Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA), which came into effect on

01 Jul, the govt statement revealed.

The RPMA increase means that a pharmacy dispensing 50,000 scripts a year will likely receive over four years \$24,000 in a large rural town (MM3); \$41,440 in a medium rural town (MM4); \$70,880 in a small rural town (MM5); \$100,320 in a remote community (MM6); and \$129,760 in a very remote community (MM7).

"When combined, the two allowances will mean that the average reduction in dispensing revenue will be offset this financial year, with continuing support and a gradual step down over four years, as the patient uptake of 60DD increases," Butler explained.

Starting this year, the National Scope of Practice Review will identify barriers and incentives for all health professionals.

From 01 Jan 2024, the National Immunisation Program will be expanded to include pharmacists, to be paid the same as doctors to administer a vaccine.

# HELPS TAKE THEIR COUGH AWAY

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\*Reference: 1. Lang C, et al., *Planta Med* 2015;81:968-974. Supported by Engelhard Arzneimittel GmbH & Co. KG.

\*Prospan is clinically proven to relieve a chesty cough in 7 days vs 14 days untreated. Schaefer A, et al., *Pharmazie* 2016;71(9):504-509.

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## 'Canary in the coal mine'

**PHARMACY** Guild National President Trent Twomey said the heartbreaking decision made by Natalie Linder to close her Montville Pharmacy (*PD* 27 Jul) was not in isolation.

"The Government has forced funding cuts on community pharmacies and what we are seeing now is just the tip of the iceberg.

"Montville Pharmacy is the canary in the coal mine and the Prime Minister and Health Minister need to realise the immediate real-world consequences of their policy.

"We think it's a fair ask to pause the introduction of 60-day dispensing so we can prevent the many unintended consequences and help deliver cheaper medicines for all Australians.

"We need a new Eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement with the Federal Government to prevent the perverse negative outcomes caused by this policy."

The Guild stated that the Mundaring Village Pharmacy in Western Australia is no longer operating on Suns, with pharmacist Jana Pratico saying, "the decision has been made in response to the recent government policy regarding the 60-day dispensing period which will have significant impacts on our operations and ability to serve effectively".

Pharmacist Adrian Marshall from Amcal Night & Day Casuarina in the Northern Territory said they had been a night-and-day chemist since 1984, but 60-day dispensing has now changed that.

"It will no longer be viable for us

to offer extended hours access to our pharmacy services...we have been night-and-day chemist in Darwin since first opening in 1984, however, it seems that we are at the end of an era," he said.

Capital Chemist Charnwood in the ACT has already been forced to close its Baby Clinic, which has been in operation for 25 years.

The pharmacy has also had to let staff go and increase fees for blood pressure services and medicine delivery.

"It's with heavy hearts we announce that Charnwood's Baby Clinic, run by Nurse Gaye, is closed," Charnwood pharmacist Samantha Kourtis told the Guild.

"Gaye has been providing care to babies and children of West Belconnen for over 25 years.

"With the current PBS reforms and government cuts to pharmacy, offering the baby clinic as a free service can no longer continue.

"We had planned to continue the clinic and charge a fee-for-service, however, parents told Gaye they were unable to pay the \$30 fee with the cost-of-living pressures that are occurring."

Safety Bay Pharmacy in Western Australia has been servicing the area since 1957, with the pharmacy now reducing operating hours.

Pharmacist Tessa Joyce said, "it is doubtful there has ever been a bigger threat to our economic viability than 60-day dispensing".

"We don't want to change the way we do things and we will continue to fight to minimise its impact on our customers."

## Call to bring forward the 8CPA heard



**THE** PSA23 conference was headlined by the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler who shared in his speech, "there have been strong arguments put to the Government around bringing forward the negotiations for the Eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA)".

"We're exploring that very closely and will have more to say on that soon," he said to a packed room of attendees.

"Whenever it starts, I look forward to the PSA's involvement in the development of the 8CPA, as the steward of professional standards."

Butler explained, "we want the pressures in our health system, the growth opportunities and the Scope of Practice Review to inform the 8CPA".

"The next CPA should be about more than dispensing revenue for pharmacy owners and must be about the professional standards, development, the integration of pharmacy as a sector in primary care and the role of pharmacists in supporting patients."

Further, the PSA recognised its top talent in Samantha Montgomery from the Queensland University of Technology, who was the recipient of the 2023 PSA Viatrix Pharmacy Student of the Year (PSOTY) award.

The annual PSOTY awards recognise and celebrate outstanding pharmacy students by showcasing their counselling skills to the pharmacy profession

and is a highlight of PSA's annual flagship conference.

Ingrid Stroud from the University of Canberra was recognised too for taking out the People's Choice award at the PSOTY awards.

The PSA also announced the 2023 Intern Pharmacist of the Year and Locum Pharmacist of the Year, which were awarded at a plenary session (*PD* Breaking News Sat).

William Chan is the 2023 PSA Locumate Locum Pharmacist of the Year, and Grace Quach has been awarded the 2023 PSA MIMS Intern Pharmacist of the Year (pictured centre with MIMS CEO Robert Best right).

"William has brought his expertise and infectious smile to pharmacies around Australia, making sure that communities have access to pharmacist advice when they need it," said National President Fei Sim (pictured left).

"The work of a locum pharmacist often goes unnoticed. William, like many locum pharmacists, takes the challenges of a new pharmacy in his stride.

"During her internship, Grace Quach was already leading a range of initiatives in her pharmacy, from developing brochures for patients to supporting other students and interns to develop their practice," Sim added.

The PDL Alan Russell Oration session 'was a hit', with delegates giving a standing ovation to world para surfing champion Sam Bloom for her story of survival.

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## Dispensary Corner

IT IS so hot in Maricopa County, Arizona, US, that people are being brought into the emergency room with significant, sometimes life-threatening burns, *CNN* has reported.

For the past three or four weeks of this record heatwave, people have been burned just by falling on the ground.

"Summers are our busy season, so we anticipate that this sort of thing is going to happen.

"But this is really unusual, the number of patients that we're seeing and the severity of injuries, the acuity of injuries is much higher," said Dr Kevin Foster, Director of Burn Services at the Arizona Burn Center at Valleywise Health.

"The numbers are higher and the seriousness of injuries are higher, and we don't have a good explanation for it."

Every one of the 45 beds in the burn centre is full, he said, and one-third of patients are people who fell and burned themselves on the ground.

There are also burn patients in the ICU, and about half of those patients are people burned after falls.

"It has definitely taken its toll," Foster said.

Asphalt is dark and dense.

While concrete is lighter and reflects some sunlight, when the sun shines on asphalt, its dark colour causes it to absorb light and it heats up.

On a hot day, asphalt can easily be 40-60 degrees hotter than the air, studies have shown.

## Collaborative care hub

A NOT-FOR-PROFIT health insurance and care company GMHBA has opened its first Health Hub in Belmont, Vic, for patients to access connected health services in a single location.

Bringing together medical, dental and physiotherapy with an adjoining pharmacy, the multi-disciplinary centre aims to offer convenience for Geelong residents who require a range of healthcare providers.

The purpose-built facility is said to feature contemporary designed consulting rooms and technology, with parking and convenient access to nearby shops and public transport.

Services at the centre are open to all local community members, not just those insured with GMHBA.

Chief Operating Officer, Health & Branch Network, Natalie Lanarus shared, "the aim was to support patients on their health journeys and connect them with specialist services, with a focus on preventive care".

"We are thrilled to open The Hub and excited about the positive impact it will have on the health and wellbeing of our members and patients.

"It represents our commitment to delivering exceptional healthcare experiences and aligns with our purpose of supporting communities



to live healthier lives," Lanarus said.

The facility is co-located with fellow Geelong not-for-profit Community Care Chemist, which will offer additional benefits to patients including access to medication, diabetes consultations, vaccinations, blood glucose testing and more.

Community Care Chemist Chief Executive Officer Nick Salkeld said the partnership was a "great example of two Geelong-based organisations, working collaboratively to ensure timely access to primary healthcare for local patients".

"The partnership furthers opportunities for collaboration amongst health practitioners, including pharmacists, GPs, dentists and other health practitioners, improving health outcomes for patients in the region, all within the convenience of the health hub," he explained.

## Hepa filters can work in bushfire season

PORTABLE air purifiers fitted with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters can substantially improve indoor air quality during bushfire events, according to new research from the national science agency, CSIRO.

Published today in *Public Health Research & Practice*,

researchers found that HEPA filters, when used appropriately, can substantially improve indoor air quality by 30-74% during smoke episodes caused by prescribed burns.

The findings could help to protect 2.7m-plus Australians currently affected by asthma.



## Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is Catherine Koetz, Director - Healthcare, GS1 Australia



## Product ID & safety through technology

THE accurate identification of products is critical for patient safety and efficient supply chain management. Enhancing that further, the use of 2D barcode technologies means that not only can you identify products, but also add the Expiry and Batch information, making inventory management easier.

GS1 DataMatrix is the preferred choice for product identification and traceability purposes within healthcare globally and has been regulated for use on medicines as an enabler of future traceability.

One of the advantages of GS1 DataMatrix is its small footprint, allowing vital product information to be encoded within limited space. We often say the focus is counterfeit products, but GS1 DataMatrix plays a significant role every day by helping reduce the waste due to expired products.

Having this kind of information available in a single scan helps prevent patients and consumers from potentially harmful consequences.

Future applications will also enable eLeaflets and instructions for use to be accessible from the same barcode, so as technology advances and regulations evolve, 2D barcode capability becomes crucial to a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape.

Watch **HERE** to learn more.