

Gain broadest foundation

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is keen to provide a vision to the profession of what career paths are available now and in the future.

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily* President Tom Simpson (pictured), said he is presenting, alongside some early career pharmacists in hospital pharmacy, at the Pharmacy Careers Summit on 07 Jul, **HERE**, to show how hospital pharmacy internships and residencies “opens doors to rewarding careers”.

“Having overseen the training of hundreds of interns, I know how vital it is for early career pharmacists to gain the best and broadest foundation of practice, on which a rewarding and varied career can be built,” Simpson said.

This foundation extends beyond the intern year into residency programs, which now include both generalist and specialist pathways, and draws on the communities of practice that SHPA offers through training programs and speciality practice networks, he explained.

“I believe the most important thing to know for pharmacists looking to enter the workforce or seeking a new direction, which we’ll discuss at the Pharmacy Careers Summit, is that hospital-informed experience is a passport to broad career options.

“It introduces you to team-based care and multidisciplinary collaboration, which is the future of healthcare.

“Our medical and nursing colleagues must practice in hospital



settings before embarking on careers in general or specialist practice,” Simpson shared.

“Hospital practice allows you to work as a member of a team with the practitioners who make up the medicines ecosystem in which you will spend the rest of your career.”

The Pharmacy Careers Summit offers a great format to engage with early career pharmacists, reflecting on their paths out of university.

“I encourage attendees to explore SHPA’s information in the virtual hall to help them determine their next career steps.

“While it is a challenging time in pharmacy broadly, there are also great opportunities for pharmacists in emerging practice areas.

“Medicines are the number one treatment intervention and, as hospital services grow in complexity, beyond traditional boundaries, pharmacists have an essential role to play in new virtual and collaborative care positions,” Simpson concluded.

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PSA23 student finalists will vie to win

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) today announced the state and territory finalists for the 2023 Viatris Pharmacy Student of the Year (PSOTY) award, with the national final to take place at PSA's National Conference PSA23 in Jul.

During the national final, students will be tested with a real-life clinical situation, where a patient will present with symptoms or a specific product request.

Students are then required to use their clinical knowledge and communication skills to identify the most appropriate course of over-the-counter treatment, tailoring their response to provide the most appropriate advice, the PSA explained.

A judging panel assesses all state finalists before selecting the national winner to be announced at the PSA23 Gala Dinner.

National President Dr Fei Sim (pictured) congratulated the finalists, saying that the awards encourage students to draw on their clinical knowledge and emotional intelligence to demonstrate their skills.

“The Pharmacy Student of the Year awards showcase the skills and abilities of some of our outstanding pharmacy students to the broader profession, while also giving students a chance to



apply their skills and be judged on them,” she said.

Viatris and PSA will provide travel and accommodation for finalists to attend PSA23, while the Pharmacy Student of the Year will also receive a \$3,000 cash prize to support their studies and pharmacy career.

The 2023 PSA Viatris Pharmacy Student of the Year finalists include Jamie-Lee Carew, the University of Newcastle, Sarah Foster, LaTrobe University, Kenneth Lam, Curtin University, Samantha Montgomery, Queensland University of Technology, Claire Ryan, University of Tasmania, Brett Spicer, University of Canberra, and Amelia Thompson, University of South Australia.

These finalists will also be joined by Ingrid Stoud from the University of Canberra, who was awarded the Wildcard winner at the 2023 National Australian Pharmacy Students Association Congress in Jan.

UK online worry

BRITAIN'S General Pharmaceutical Council has taken action six times in the last year over “fitness-to-practice cases” relating to UK online pharmacies.

Two pharmacists were suspended and warnings issued to others, at least one of which was “linked to concerns around high-risk online prescribing practices using a questionnaire-based prescribing model, reported *Chemist+Druggist*.”

The regulator said it was also looking at over 100 open cases involving internet pharmacies.

Training module

PHARMACY Club and iNova have a new Quality Care Pharmacy Program module for pharmacy staff.

The online learning module has been designed to help pharmacy assistants describe the different types of coughs, its causes as well as the different types of treatment options available, and when to recommend the Duro-Tuss range.

The 30-minute module is available at iNova learning hub along with other resources, **HERE**.

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Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

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MedAdvisor to cut 20% of workforce

LISTED medication adherence specialist MedAdvisor has announced the outcome of a strategic review, which has identified "significant operational cost savings" following the successful integration of its GuildLink acquisition.

The company said it will save \$2 million on an annual basis via a 20% reduction in staff by the end of this month, with the associated restructuring and redundancy costs included in the 22/23 financial year.

"The company's completion of the GuildLink integration on schedule and below budget, coupled with the initial realisation of strategic benefits, marks a significant achievement for MedAdvisor," according to an ASX update.

"The company is committed to building upon this foundation and leveraging the combined businesses to create enhanced value for all stakeholders."

A trading update indicates expected FY23 revenue of \$95

million to \$97 million, reflecting an increase of over 40%.

Improvements are also expected to profitability, with MedAdvisor now anticipating a loss of between \$3 million and \$3.5 million - a significant uplift compared to last year's \$11.3 million overall deficit.

The organisation's Pathway to Profitability aims to drive operational efficiencies, with recent moves including the cloud migration of the company's US products which has lowered expenses and improved scalability.

"By consolidating resources and leveraging synergies, MedAdvisor has positioned itself for profitability in FY24," the company said.

MedAdvisor's US pipeline is materially above the previous corresponding period, with this growth attributed to diversification from traditional to digital revenue streams which has put the company in a strong position to capitalise during strong selling periods over the next six months.



CEO Rick Ratliff said, "we remain committed to delivering value to our shareholders".

Those shareholders include the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, with Guild Group Holdings taking a 15% stake in MedAdvisor in exchange for GuildLink last year in a deal valuing the in-house pharmacy tech firm at just over \$9 million.

Anthony Tassone, Vic Branch President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, also sits on the MedAdvisor Board of Directors.

RPMA matrix

THE Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) has released the Payment Matrix for the Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) for 2023/24.

Applications are currently being assessed, with the matrix based on the Modified Monash Model and payments ranging from \$6,000 for Category 3 Inner Regional pharmacies through to a maximum of \$95,404 for Category 7 Very Remote pharmacies with the lowest prescription volume.

The median annual script volume in the matrix is 45,825 per pharmacy.

The PPA anticipates that RPMA renewal applications will be finalised by mid-Jul, at which point all Service Providers with a current pending renewal in place will receive an email advising the outcome and, where applicable, the new payment amount for the 2023/24 year.

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*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.





Dispensary Corner

AIR pollution can have more consequences than just exacerbating asthma, according to a new study from the Harvard Medical School in the USA.

The observational research has found that dog bites may also be more common when there are higher levels of airborne particulates, after analysing data on attacks in eight US cities between 2009 and 2018.

They also looked at weather conditions and found days when it was warmer also appeared to be more likely to exacerbate canine tempers, with bites occurring up to 11% more frequently in sunny weather.

The *Scientific Reports* journal also reported a slight decrease (1%) in bites on days with high rainfall, after analysing the information on Dallas, Houston, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Chicago, Louisville, Los Angeles and New York City.

Collectively the reports noted almost 70,000 dog bites, an average of three bites per day in total across the cities.

The researchers noted that other studies have found higher temperatures increase the likelihood of aggression among humans, rhesus monkeys, rats and mice.

"We conclude that dogs, or the interactions between humans and dogs, are more hostile on hot, sunny and smoggy days, indicating that the societal burden of extreme heat and air pollution also includes the costs of animal aggression," the study's authors wrote.

Buzzing with joy

AUSTRALIA'S Manuka honey industry has welcomed the end of a costly legal battle, as New Zealand honey interests confirm they will not appeal the recent trademark decision.

Australian Manuka Honey Association chairman Ben McKee said, "we are very pleased to learn that there will be no appeal from what was a very well-considered ruling".

"This closes a legal chapter that has been costly for all involved, and I'm delighted to be refocusing our attention on promoting Australian Manuka honey to the world.

"We will continue to seek collaboration with our NZ counterparts, as there is more to be gained in working together as the only two producers of native Manuka honey, than in fighting protracted legal battles.

"With rising international demand, there is room for both Australian and NZ Manuka honey in our key markets.

"Together we have a wonderful story to tell about the scientifically-supported health benefits of honey from the *Leptospermum* plants, whichever side of the Tasman that honey comes from."

Dr McKee said while there were many passionate members of the industry in NZ who felt strongly about their local product, this was also true in the Australian industry.

"I would welcome those in NZ knowing more about the very long associations that Australia's First Nations people have with Manuka, and the reality of our industry in Australia."

Speaking out on hepatitis

PHARMACY customers can now have a say on two important strategies that will guide Australia's action against hepatitis B and C to eliminate these viruses as public health issues by 2030.

Hepatitis B and C are a significant public health challenge causing serious illness that inflames and damages the liver.

In Australia, about 232,000 people live with hepatitis B, and about 227,000 people live with hepatitis C.

The draft *Fourth National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030* and *Sixth National Hepatitis C Strategy 2023-2030* outlines goals, targets, priority populations and settings, and key areas for action to help Australians live free from the impact of hepatitis B and C.

The strategies are part of a broader set of new National Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Strategies setting a strong direction for a continued response to BBV and STI.

Both strategies were drafted following consultation with state and territory governments, sector peak bodies including Hepatitis Australia, national community organisations, national research



centres of excellence, and the Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Standing Committee.

The strategies are available **HERE** for feedback until 28 Jun.

The Federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, shared, "ensuring Australians can live free from the impact of hepatitis B and C is an Australian Government priority.

"Everyone deserves equitable access to vaccines, prevention measures, education, testing, management and treatment.

"We are working to eliminate hepatitis B and C as public health threats by 2030.

"These strategies will help guide our work over the next eight years to achieve this ambitious, life-saving goal," Butler said.



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