



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features five pages of news, plus a full page from Wizard.

Better returns

WIZARD Pharmacy will be at the APP 2023 conference, so meet them at their stands 369 and 370 to learn how to improve returns on your business, and also have a free coffee on them.

See more on the **last page**.

AMA index push

THE Australian Medical Association (AMA) has warned that "critical problems in general practice of access and affordability" cannot be addressed without better indexing of Medicare.

Currently Medicare is indexed at just 1.6%, vs 3.7% for public hospital services.

Priceline revamps online offering

WESFARMERS-OWNED Priceline Pharmacy has launched a new website, expanding the brand's strong focus on digital retailing, with all orders directed to local Priceline outlets.

Kirsty MacCulloch, Wesfarmers Health GM of Digital & Data, said the mobile-first site design makes it simpler for customers to search for, browse and purchase products.

"We know our franchise partners value the additional sales avenue offered by our website, with every online order placed on priceline.com.au directed to stores for fulfilment," she said.

She said the site offered a range of convenient delivery options including standard, same-day and click-and-collect, while customers are also able to select their favourite Priceline retailer.

Participating stores offer weekday "Fast Delivery" to customers living within a 10km radius, in two delivery windows: 10am to 1pm



and 1pm to 4pm.

"Moving to an integrated fulfilment model and investing in improvements to our click and collect systems means we're driving foot traffic back into stores, even when orders are placed online," MacCulloch noted.

First-time visitors to the new site are being invited to reset passwords to access exclusive offers, with members of the Priceline Sister Club who log in able to view an enhanced loyalty dashboard which allows them to

check reward points balances and add prizes to their shopping cart.

Other upgraded features include enhanced product descriptions and a wider range of pharmacy products available online.

The new priceline.com.au site's debut follows the recent "I'm me" Priceline campaign (PD 23 Feb) which aims to celebrate positive ageing through a range of initiatives including staff video training from Priceline ambassador Ita Buttrose who has been named the group's Positive Ageing Chief.

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Health & climate action

CONSULTATION on Australia's first National Health and Climate Strategy has commenced to ensure the country's health system can meet the challenges of climate change.

With more frequent and extreme climate events, climate change presents a serious health and wellbeing challenge to Australians according to Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney and Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy Jenny McAllister, who held a roundtable on Fri focusing on how the health system can adapt to a changing climate, as well as steps the system can take to reduce emissions.

The strategy will establish a three-year plan of action to better prepare the health and aged care sectors for the challenges presented by climate change, including more frequent and severe weather events, extreme temperatures, and poor air quality.

The strategy will identify priority areas for action to reduce carbon emissions in the health and aged care sectors, as well as managing the impacts of climate change to ensure all Australians continue to access good quality health and aged care.

The consultations will include state and territory governments, peak bodies, and other non-government organisations.

Kearney shared that "the health impacts of climate change cannot be understated.

"We are already seeing it from floods, fires, droughts and heatwaves, there are very real



threats to the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

"The effects of climate change are only expected to intensify and it's important that our health system is prepared to deal with it.

"Our health and aged care sectors are already stretched and under pressure.

"Today we begin the process of working with partners to make sure they're properly prepared for the future.

"The health sector must be prepared but it also should be part of the solution.

"Our health and aged care sectors have a role to play in reducing their own carbon footprints."

McAllister added that "after a decade of inaction and dysfunction, the Government is committed to acting on climate change.

"This roundtable will inform the National Health and Climate Strategy as well as our work on the first National Climate Risk Assessment to deliver a shared national framework for climate adaptation and resilience actions".

Hygiene advice is a novel offer, says FIP

ADVICE on hygiene given by pharmacies has widened from oral care to now encompass infection control measures, according to a report by the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Global Pharmaceutical Observatory (GPO) published last month.

A literature review conducted by the FIP GPO found educating people on hygiene measures such as handwashing and disinfection to be a novel community pharmacy service during the pandemic.

The FIP GPO also conducted a cross-country survey (India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Thailand) through five FIP member organisations.

More than half of the respondents reported that avoidance of respiratory, viral, communicable, and food and water-borne infections were the most common "germ concerns" expressed to them by the public.

The study also looked into current and future learning needs of pharmacy teams in the five countries.

Around 53% of respondents said they obtained information on hygiene as part of their continuing professional development.

"Hygiene, general and personal, is important for self-care.

"The report shows that pharmacists and their teams can offer a valuable service to empower people to maintain health, and to prevent and manage illness.

"However, our study also indicated that the profession needs more support with learning about hygiene", said Christopher John, FIP lead for data and intelligence, and co-author of the report.

FIP's report *What community pharmacy teams need to support good hygiene as part of people's self-care* is available [HERE](#).

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Dining together helps with health

OLDER Australians should sit down for community lunches regularly to combat social isolation that may become a serious health risk as they age, according to new research from South Australia's Flinders University.

In the US, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has warned that loneliness in older adults can increase their risk of depression, dementia and even death.

While estimates vary, it's understood loneliness rates among older people have reached 46% in Australia.

"The potential health consequences of loneliness for older Australians include poor immune function and psychological wellbeing, and increased rates of high blood pressure, cognitive decline, anxiety, hypertension, falls, re-hospitalisation and institutionalisation - so social interactions should be prioritised and done quickly," said author Dr Georgia Middleton.

The study, also led by Prof John Coveney from the University's Caring Futures Institute, brought together 12 individuals in Adelaide aged over 65, who were considered to be at risk of loneliness.

They took part in a 12-week shared lunch program found to foster community inclusion and improve health outcomes.

1 in 5 refuse statins, more so women

THE Heart Foundation is asking Australians with high cholesterol not to refuse to take life-saving statin medication after a new international study found that one in five people do not take their prescribed statins.

The US-based study published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reviewed the medical data of millions of US citizens using artificial intelligence and natural language processing technology to find that one in five Americans refused to accept statin therapy despite being at high risk of developing heart disease.

The study also found that women were more likely than men to refuse to take statins when prescribed, and also less likely than men to achieve good cholesterol control within 12 months from diagnosis.

This study demonstrates that patients are active agents in their care, and their preferences and priorities should be carefully taken into account when making treatment recommendations.

The Heart Foundation said the study was the first of its type and more work would need to be done to understand what was causing the reluctance.

But the results are cause for enough concern to warn Australians to continue taking their statins, especially women for whom heart health outcomes were often worse than men.

"Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death among Australian women," said Natalie



Raffoul, Healthcare Programs Manager at the Heart Foundation.

"High cholesterol impacts 6.5 million Australians - including 3.6 million Australian women - and is well recognised as a leading risk factor for heart attacks in the country.

"Statin therapy is the gold-standard, first-line, cholesterol lowering medication prescribed for high-risk individuals to help reduce their chances of having a heart attack or stroke.

"If you are prescribed statins by your GP, it is because you are at high risk of a heart attack or stroke.

"It's crucial that you consider taking these medicines, which are commonly regarded as having been critical to the reduction in cardiovascular death in Australia over the last 50 years."

Raffoul said the study's findings were in line with existing evidence that patient adherence to statin

therapy was poor.

"This new study suggests that even before the point of being prescribed a medication, acceptance of statin therapy is poor too," she explained.

"We have more work to do to understand what is causing this reluctance so that we can improve the uptake of statins among those who are prescribed them."

In Nov 2022, the Heart Foundation released the *Cholesterol Roadblocks and Solutions* report, developed by the foundation in collaboration with the World Heart Federation and a roundtable of Australian healthcare experts.

The report makes a number of important recommendations that will require the combined efforts of patients, GPs, the cardiovascular sector and Federal and State/Territory Governments to implement over the coming years.

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Sigma Healthcare's CHS deal "not material"

SIGMA Healthcare shares were briefly placed into a trading halt on the Australian Securities Exchange on Fri, after the company's announcement of the sale of its Central Healthcare Services Limited (CHS) division was incorrectly classified as "price sensitive".

Sigma announced it would sell the intellectual property relating to the CHS trademark and logo, its hospital services operations along with designated inventory to Clifford Hallam Healthcare Limited (CH2) (PD 10 Mar).

About half an hour after releasing the news, trading in Sigma's shares was temporarily paused, and then later in the day the company released a supplementary announcement with further details.

"Sigma advises that the consideration for the transaction is approximately \$44 million, consisting of approximately \$35 million for the designated hospital stock, with the balance of \$9 million being allocated to the other assets being sold," the update said.

"Sigma confirms that it does not consider the transaction to be material in the context of the overall Sigma group...the original announcement was released as price sensitive as the result of an administrative error," it continued.

Sigma purchased CHS almost a decade ago (PD 27 Mar 2014), at the time paying \$24.5 million for the business.

MEANWHILE Clifford Hallam Healthcare has advised customers that it expects the deal to be finalised by 31 Mar.

"CH2 intends to combine the CH2



and CHS hospital operations to ensure the merged business is at a scale to improve service levels, and ongoing investment in the CH2 hospital business raises the overall offering," the company said.

"CH2 will provide the necessary ongoing financial support, investment in stock, information systems and people to ensure the service CHS and CH2 customers expect, and should receive, is delivered at the highest level for the long term," CH2 said.

The CHS business will become part of the CH2 Hospital division headed up by Pierre Wassef, while at a local level customers will be looked after by CH2's pharmacy Business Development Managers.

"Sigma Healthcare will stop trading to customers at the close of business on the 31 Mar 2023 and the CHS customers will start to operate within the CH2 hospital pharmacy business from the 01 Apr 2023," the company added.

CH2 CEO David Collins said that

as the majority of customers are already dealing with both wholesalers, it is the intention to provide the lowest price of the two organisations.

"Strategically the CHS and CH2 hospital operations are a very good fit...both businesses are specialist healthcare wholesalers.

"Both organisations service the same customers and supplier base.

"CH2 has a strategy of continuing to increase in scale in our hospital division...both CH2 and CHS hospital businesses are currently subscale and deliver negative or low return on the invested capital.

"It is our view that increasing scale into this sector for CH2 will support this division in achieving an acceptable and sustainable return," the CH2 CEO said.

Collins added that "we see this as another important step in advancing CH2's commitment to Australian healthcare, and will further streamline the business to fully support the hospital sector".

\$10 million for booster campaign

THE Federal Government has confirmed a \$10 million campaign to promote the uptake of COVID-19 booster immunisations.

The Department of Health and Ageing has committed to an extensive media buy for the promotion, which will be timed for the lead-up to winter when case numbers are expected to rise.

Only about 72% of people aged over 16 have received three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, with the Government now encouraging everyone to receive a booster, particularly if it has been six months or longer since their last COVID-19 immunisation or confirmed infection.

Recently updated recommendations from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) are for a 2023 COVID-19 vaccine booster dose for all adults aged 65 years and older, and for those aged 18-64 who have medical comorbidities that increase their risk of severe COVID-19.

Booster doses are not currently recommended for people aged under 18 who do not have any risk factors.

ATAGI also noted COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered with other vaccines including for influenza, with booster doses recommended prior to Jun 2023.

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Dispensary Corner

A SEVEN-year-old girl in India has earned a Guinness World Record as the world's youngest certified yoga instructor.

The record-keeping organisation said Praanvi Gupta was seven years and 165 days old when she was verified as the world's youngest yoga instructor.

Gupta, who started practising yoga with her mother when she was just three, was certified as a teacher by the Yoga Alliance Organization after completing a 200-hour training course.

"I want to spread the love of yoga to as many people as possible," Gupta told Guinness, according to a UPI report.

"This journey was not an easy one, because of my regular school which was also ongoing.

"But, with great support from my teachers and parents, I'm happy that I completed and passed the qualification exam for the yoga teachers training course," she said.

The youngster regularly shares her love of yoga on her YouTube channel, *Learning with Praanvi*.

Guild digest survey open

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has opened submissions for its 2023 Guild Digest survey ([CLICK HERE](#)).

Information provided will feed into this year's Guild Digest, which presents an annual snapshot of the operation and financial performance of Australian community pharmacies.

AI increases inequalities

A MONASH University study has found using artificial intelligence in aged care homes can exacerbate ageism and social inequality.

The paper, published in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, has revealed the unmet value of artificial intelligence (AI) to help solve aged care issues including loneliness of residents through chat, video and image sharing, through to medical diagnosis and assessments tools.

The study found pushing AI technology - from robots to voice assistants - into aged care can exacerbate ageist views due to the choices of carers on how best to use technology for older people in these settings.

"AI can perpetuate ageism and exacerbate existing social inequalities," lead author Dr Barbara Barbosa Neves said.

"When implementing AI technologies in aged care, we must consider them as part of a suite of care services and not as isolated solutions."

The study reveals more work is needed to better incorporate how older people are viewed in the design and implementation of AI technologies to ensure it can assist the sector.

The findings show ageism can be generated by design which includes views about older people as dependent, incompetent, and disinterested in technology, rather than engaged.

It shows that both AI developers and aged care staff assume lack of interest and/or capacity of older people to use the technology.

This largely ignores the need to be accessible and non-discriminatory to aged care residents.

Aged care staff and advocates are critical about the value of AI to solve care issues with concerns of



replacing humans with robots, and who is responsible for machinery failures.

The study reveals the need to change stereotypes about aged care residents, and attitudes of staff, and create technologies that are designed for, and inclusive of, older people.

"The use of AI in aged care must be done with consideration of the potential impact of these technologies on wellbeing, autonomy, and dignity of older residents," Dr Neves said.

This comes off the back of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which emphasised the need to put the autonomy and dignity of older people in care.

US COVID shift

THE US Food and Drug Administration has confirmed that America's formal public health emergency declaration relating to COVID-19 is expected to expire on 11 May.

The organisation has noted that a series of guidance documents are tied to the declaration, and will no longer be in effect after that date.

However the FDA is also revising some of its guidance to continue in effect for an additional 180 days - [fda.gov](#).

Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Paul Rowe, Managing Director, The Business Squad.**



Real life retail tips

NO MATTER what your pharmacological qualifications and experience, the world of retail is often challenging, so here are a few tips to help you survive and thrive:

- 1. Have (and keep) a sense of humour** – at the end of the day you must be able to laugh a little at the situations, people or challenges that arise in a retail setting.
- 2. Speak English – not 'medicine'** – Your patients often don't understand technical or medical names, terms, and instructions. Communication is the key as is patience.
- 3. Know your patients** – say 'hello', make small talk and try to be involved in their lives at a professional level. This will build trust, which in turn builds repeat custom.
- 4. Do something else** – get a hobby, take time out, detach yourself sometimes to be a better retail pharmacist. This isn't always easy to do, but it is important to try.
- 5. Remember to do all the above all the time!** Successful retailing is an art form, and you are the artist, play your part well!

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