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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features five pages of news, plus full pages from:

- AndiCo
- Optipharm
- TerryWhite Chemmart

Meets standards

ANDI & Co have the highest pharmaceutical-grade appliances that observe all the stringent safety and temperature control requirements.

See more on **page six**.

Top VLCD brand

OPTISLIM has been the number one very low calorie diet (VLCD) brand for 25 years.

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See more on **page seven**.

Integration tracking well

MEDADVISOR'S integration with GuildLink to a single platform is progressing well, expanding the medication adherence software company's coverage to 1,500 pharmacy locations.

MedAdvisor's CEO Rick Ratliff (**pictured**) says "we are extremely excited about our relationship with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, and that through the implementation of GuildLink, we've expanded our pharmacy coverage making a data-driven approach to managing the pharmacy market and the delivery of healthcare services easier and more targeted."

"We have relationships now with 95% of pharmacies in Australia to support their digital engagement with patients, and really set the foundation for the future, as pharmacists become an even bigger part of the delivery of healthcare."

The integration is on track to be completed by Jun.

Ratliff added that "in pursuit of our goal to be the digital partner



for community pharmacy, we're well on our way with integration of the GuildLink platform so that retail pharmacies are in a good position to serve their customers during the flu season."

Further, as pharmacists' scope of practice expands the "platform is a great foundation to support specific issues, say potentially a woman's health issue, streamlining the entire process from patient scheduling through to reporting and payment, all backed by data to help the pharmacist understand, effectively target and engage their community for the different services they're going to be able to perform," Ratliff said.

Supply order on

A SUPPLY order for the diabetes drug Fiasp has been issued by the Department of Health to ensure that the drug is available in pharmacies for the next six months or so.

The supply order came as manufacturer Novo Nordisk made the decision to take its fast-acting insulin drug off the market as soon as 01 Apr.

Health Minister Mark Butler told 2GB, "they've taken a commercial decision to withdraw their Fiasp product, which is used by 14k or 15k Australians and...this was a shock to us."

"This was a really special product for those with type 1."

"We are out talking to pharmacies to make sure that the supply is there."

"The government's job is to make sure there's an equivalent product put back on the market after that six-month supply order expires."

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\$1 limit 'bizarre'

THE Australian Medical Association (AMA) has written to the Federal Government encouraging the move for pharmacies to discount PBS medicines that have a co-payment.

AMA President Steve Robson said: "Under the current system pharmacies can't discount more than a single dollar.

"It's a bizarre system that stops the market making medicine cheaper for all of us, and considering consumers are skipping medicines because of cost - a persistent problem according to successive Productivity Commission Reports on Government Services."

Research released by the Grattan Institute last year found 'nearly 50% of the out-of-pocket payments by people with at least one chronic condition are on prescribed medications' and that 'people with chronic illness skip pharmaceuticals at 2.5 times the rate of people without a chronic condition'.

Robson said it's disastrous for both patients and the health system for people to be skipping medications because of the cost, with patients getting sicker and sometimes ending up in emergency.

"The AMA has proposed a simple policy solution that won't hurt the budget bottom line but will make a significant difference to patients."

Ride to remember gets on the road



LAST Fri, 25 cyclists started on their gruelling nine day, 1,450km ride from Bondi Beach to the Barossa Valley, to raise awareness and funds for research into a cure for dementia.

The Bondi2Barossa Ride to Remember is staged by the Dementia Research Community.

Dementia is the second leading cause of death of Australians and the leading cause of death among women.

There are 487,500 Australians currently living with dementia and this is set to increase to 1,076,000 by 2058, and there is no cure.

The Dementia Research Community (formerly known as Bondi2Berry) brings together dedicated people with a common goal - to raise awareness of dementia, and to fundraise to help find a cure.

Since an inaugural one-day ride from Bondi to Berry in 2016, Dementia Research Community has raised over \$1.2m and funded five vital research projects in search of a cure.

This year's ride will allow funding of a sixth research project; one that is being run by Dr Kristie Stefanoska out of Flinders University focused on a tau-associated factor to enhance memory function and prevent neuronal cell death.

Co-founder Nick Young is looking forward to engaging many local communities on route through school visits and meet and greets.

"This is the third multi-day ride we have organised, and it is certainly the biggest.

"We are looking forward to getting on the road and visiting some amazing places to help raise awareness of dementia.

"We are riding to remember our loved ones who have passed away from dementia" said Young, who is riding in memory of his father who passed away less than a year ago after an 11-year battle with dementia.

"As always, we are especially grateful to all our participants and volunteers, with special acknowledgment to our platinum partners Wilson Asset

Management, Oni Group and Gresham.

"As well as our gold partners Innovync, Mettle and Twilight Aged Care, and all our event partners for helping to make this event possible."

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Bianco L et al., *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2012; 60:1180-1.



Vision 2020 calls for shorter wait times

WITH the NSW election less than a week away, Vision 2020 Australia is calling on all sides of politics to commit to implementing meaningful solutions to current eye health issues affecting the state.

Vision 2020 CEO Carly Iles said the organisation is campaigning for a reduction in waiting times for cataract surgery, which are the “worst in the country”, and an increase in sight-saving eye injection treatment in the public hospital system.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Elective Surgery Waiting Times Report 2021-22 shows that NSW is at the bottom of the pile when it comes to cataract surgery. NSW has the longest median wait time in Australia at 278

days, compared to the national median of 158 days, and well behind the best-performing states Victoria and Queensland (84 days).

Almost one in five (19.2%) people in NSW are waiting longer than 12 months before receiving surgery in the public system.

Iles said this is not acceptable as “cataract surgery is one of the most performed surgeries worldwide, and it is highly successful in restoring vision.

“However, long waiting times can lead to complications and cause thousands to be needlessly blind and lose their independence.”

The impact of the wait times is also economical with people unable to work, with increased risk of falls and the need for carers.

SHPA heads to tropics



PROVIDING long-term certainty for Australia’s pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has announced Medicines Management 2023 conference will be held in Cairns, 02-04 Nov, and MM2024 will be held in Adelaide, 14-16 Nov 2024.

SHPA President Tom Simpson says announcing the host cities of next two iterations of Australia’s largest scientific pharmacy conference together will support forward planning as the event continues to grow in scope and influence in an evolving pharmacy landscape.

“As a peak health body with a unique perspective on optimising medicines use, SHPA looks forward to presenting another exceptional program that excites and inspires our pharmacists, technicians and their peers,” Simpson said.

“The boundaries of Australian pharmacy are changing, and practitioners who specialise as part of team-based care represent the future of pharmacy care across all settings: in our hospitals, in the community, in residential aged care, and at home.

“Amid these growing opportunities for pharmacists and technicians, we are also mindful of the lingering impacts of a turbulent few years.

Following a three-year hiatus, SHPA says its MM2022 returned strongly as Australia’s premier scientific pharmacy conference.

“Members have told us how much they value the space to truly flourish and connect, and we look forward to taking MM back to the tropics.”

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the return to Queensland will close an exceptional chapter in the history of the SHPA National Conference.

“Medicines Management has hit new heights in the Sunshine State in recent years, seeing our biggest attendance figures and an incredibly successful return last Dec,” Michaels said.

“We’ve listened to members and look forward to again delivering our full-scale conference, but with an intimate and individualised feel, which will be reflected in our MM2023 theme to be revealed soon.

“We’re also excited to finally return to Adelaide next year after our MM2020 postponement, where boutique eateries, calm beaches and beautiful spring weather will provide the perfect backdrop for MM2024.”

For more information on the upcoming conference and registration **CLICK HERE**.

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\$10m for repairs

THE Federal Government is giving \$10m for First Nations health infrastructure such as repairs, maintenance and upgrades to health clinics and other structures.

Applications are open now for this latest round of grants to eligible Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), through the Service Maintenance Program, and close on 27 Apr.

The aim is for Indigenous Australians to have better access to high-quality, fit-for-purpose, culturally-appropriate healthcare.

Asst Minister for Indigenous Health Malarndirri McCarthy said that the "existing stock of ACCHS infrastructure is 20-40 years old and is in significant need of repair, reconstruction or enhancement.

"These grants are in addition to \$120m investment in capital works...for Closing The Gap."

Blooms' intern program to grow brand

BLOOMS The Chemist, has made the transition from study to practice easier for aspiring pharmacists across Australia by introducing its '2023 Future of Pharmacy Intern Program'.

The comprehensive three-year program is designed to provide interns with a holistic foundation on how to operate in a community pharmacy with a focus on clinical, ethical, and business practices.

"The current personnel shortage in the pharmaceutical industry and the growing need for quality, skilled healthcare workers in Australia means it's important that we grow and develop talented pharmacists within our brand," says Blooms The Chemist, CEO, Emmanuel Vavoulas.

The program provides each intern with a cumulative financial incentive of \$30k over three years paid by Blooms The Chemist Support Office.

The program is available to a maximum of 40 interns who must be continually employed full time



in a Blooms The Chemist pharmacy for the duration of the three years.

Each intern that is registered as a pharmacist will at the end of their first year receive \$5k.

Furthermore, if they remain employed full time with Blooms The Chemist at the end of their second year and third year, they will each receive an additional \$10k and \$15k, respectively.

This initiative applies to all current and future interns for subsequent years.

The first cohort of 28 interns has begun the program with a view to complete their first year by 31 Dec, second year by the end of 2024 and third year by the end of 2025.

The first workshop of the

program, which included an introduction to what it is like to work at Blooms The Chemist, took place last month and was positively received by the new intern cohort.

Commenting on the program, Blooms The Chemist, Orange, intern, Kayla Gibson said that "Blooms The Chemist supports me not just as an intern, but as a student and a person where I'm trusted to learn and practice my skills as a future pharmacist."

Leading the program is the group's Professional Services and Compliance Manager, Casey Shannon who said "interns will complete written and oral practical clinical and ethical scenarios for their final exams by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, and the opportunity to receive mentorship from AACP-accredited pharmacists within the network."

Platinum sponsors of the program include Aretex, Haleon, MPS, Sandoz, Sanofi, Seqirus and Symbion.

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Dispensary Corner

THE President of Mexico has come up with an explanation for an opioid overdose crisis in the USA - apparently it's because American families don't hug their children enough.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was commenting on claims that Mexico is not cracking down hard enough on cartels which are trafficking fentanyl, blamed for about 70,000 overdoses annually in the US.

The problem, he told a news briefing last week, was due to "a lot of disintegration of families.

"There is a lot of individualism, there is a lack of love, of brotherhood, of hugs and embraces," Lopez Obrador said.

"That is why US officials should be dedicating funds to address the causes," he added, noting his belief that close-knit family values are what has saved Mexico from a similar fentanyl crisis.

Some American officials have called on Mexico to designate drug gangs as terrorist organisations, according to an *Associated Press* report, but Lopez Obrador described US anti-drug policies as a failure, and also proposed a ban in both nations on medicinal use of fentanyl, despite most of the problems relating to illicitly produced counterfeit fentanyl.

The Mexican government has also been stung by a recent official warning from the Texas Department of Public Safety to avoid travel to parts of Mexico during the upcoming spring break holiday period, due to the risk of cartel violence.

Seamless face for brand

DIRECT Chemist Outlet (DCO) held its Retail Managers Conference last month to equip retail managers with skills and tools to provide customers with an exceptional experience, and provide opportunities for attendees to learn, network and exchange ideas.

The Retail Managers Conference was attended by retail managers from all Direct Chemist Outlet locations across the country.

The conference included presentations from industry experts and internal senior executives, as well as interactive workshops and networking sessions.

Direct Chemist Outlet Director, Ian Tauman, said: "At Direct Chemist Outlet, we recognise that our retail managers play a critical role in delivering a seamless and exceptional shopping experience, that's why we were excited to host this conference to equip them with the latest knowledge and tools."

The conference focused on various topics such as customer experience, marketing, inventory management, leadership and sales, led by industry experts and professionals with decades of retail management expertise.

The group held its Golden Awards



night celebrating individuals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to their store, community and the DCO brand.

Major awards included:

- Brand of the Month 2022 Winner: DCO Tura Beach (Angela Vandersluis);
 - Direct Knowledge Hub Award: Anastasia Kounelis (Elsternwick);
 - Excellence in Operations Award: DCO, Bega;
 - Excellence in Buying Award: DCO, Croydon;
 - Excellence in Marketing Award: DCO, Gympie;
 - Store of the Year: DCO Kingston;
 - Retail Manager of the Year: Codi Patterson (DCO Rosebud);
- Highly Commended:
- Wendy Kassabis (DCO Belvedere Park);
 - Jess Spathis (DCO Werribee);
- and
- Janelle Crockford (DCO Centro Somerville).

Low risk of harm at birth with opioids

INFANTS born to mothers prescribed opioids after delivery, mostly after a caesarean, are at no greater risk of harm shortly after birth than infants of mothers not prescribed opioids, finds a large study from Canada published by *The BMJ* last week

The team looked at data from nearly 865,700 mum-bub pairs

over eight years, and checked in on the kids of the mums who were prescribed opioids.

They say in the 30 days following birth, the numbers of kids who were admitted back to hospital were even between the meds and no meds groups, showing that opioids do not present a unique hazard.

Weekly Comment

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

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



Getting the most from APP

APP is almost here and pharmacists from all over Australia will be descending on the Gold Coast to listen to the pearls of wisdom from industry experts and our peers.

PBS price disclosure, the capping of professional fees, increased pressure from the supermarkets, rising rents, shrinking margins and greater competition are just a few of the challenges facing pharmacy.

Turning up is just the beginning. Take the opportunity to mix with people of like mind.

Most sessions are interactive which means at some point there will be a question & answer opportunity. Use it!

There is no such thing as a stupid question, whatever you do have an open mind, take all the information in, and then analyse it, but take it in first. You never know when a real gem will pop up, exposing a myriad of opportunities for your business.

So if there is one thing I can tell you about conferences it is have an open mind, listen and act. Take at least one thing away from a conference that you commit to doing either in your pharmacy or personally.



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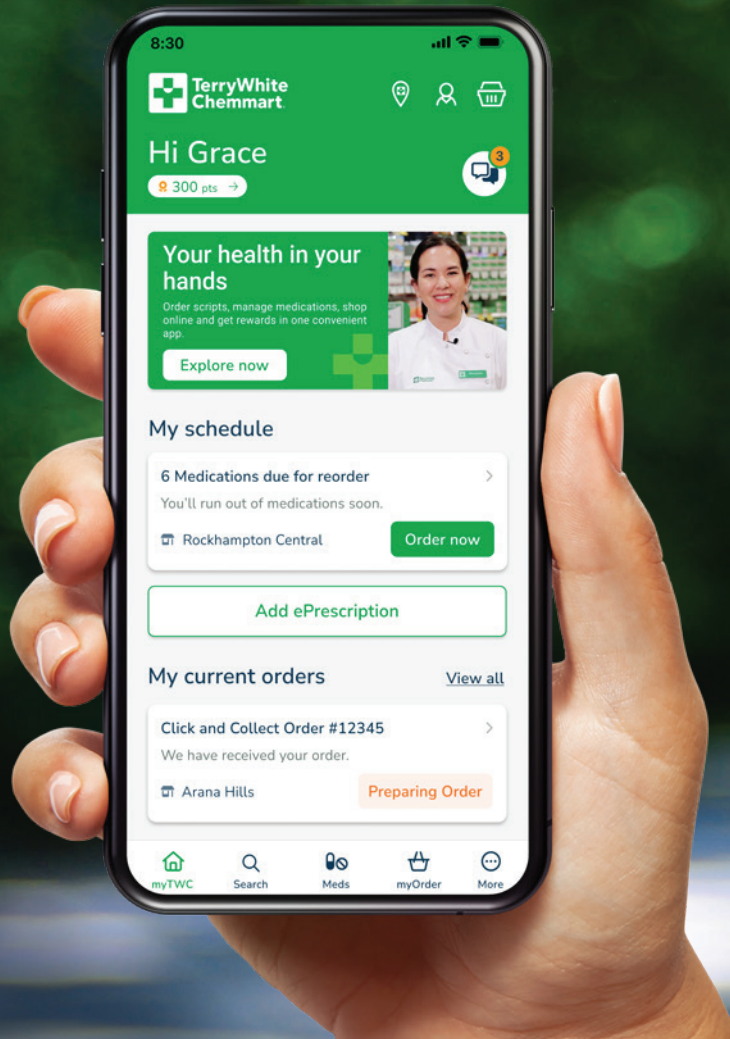
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