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## Today's issue of PD

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

## Ups patient care

**TERRYWHITE** Chemmart's myTWC app puts convenience first by reducing script wait times allowing you to spend more time caring for patients. See more on the [back page](#).

## 'Dark day' arrives

A **SURPLUS** predicted in today's Budget should not be built off the back of a \$3.5b cut to 6,000 community pharmacies across Australia, according to the Pharmacy Guild President Trent Twomey. "It's a dark day for healthcare & is completely the wrong approach esp. with 158 drugs currently in shortage."

## CW 'underpay' case in SA

**LEGAL** action has been launched by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA) in the South Australia Employment Tribunal against some Chemist Warehouse franchisee store owners in Colonnades, Elizabeth City Centre, Modbury and Clovelly Park.

The nine workers claim their employers asked them to complete a Certificate III in Community Pharmacy to allow them to complete higher-level work duties.

However, a statement of claim lodged by the SDA states that the workers were not paid in line with their new duties and are owed a total of \$45,000.

The SDA has warned that the lawsuit has the potential to affect 1,000 employees across 350 stores in Australia.

As reported in *The Advertiser* the average amount of money being claimed is \$5,000 with the union estimating that the amount of underpayment, if the claims are proven, could be \$600,000 in SA



alone and up to \$10m at a national level.

Commenting to *Pharmacy Daily* a spokesperson stated that Chemist Warehouse "itself is not a party to the proceedings with the SDA.

"Chemist Warehouse franchisees are respondents in the case.

"On speaking with the respondent franchisees, and as is noted in the article in *The Advertiser*, they reject the allegation of any underpayment and will defend their position vigorously.

"Beyond this, as the matter is before the Tribunal, neither the franchisees nor Chemist Warehouse will make a further comment - as is standard practice."

The lawsuit is set down for a 10-day trial before the SA Employment Tribunal in Aug this year.

## Tell the Minister

**THE PBS** has put out a Notification Form to be used to notify the Minister for Health and Aged Care of a likely or actual breach of the minimum stockholding requirements, to commence on 01 Jul, which is available on the Medicines Supply Security Guarantee page [HERE](#).

From Jul, Minimum Stockholding Requirements will apply where manufacturers will be required to hold a minimum of either four or six months of stock in Australia for certain PBS-listed medicines, referred to as 'Designated Brands'.

The PBS stated that these measures will not prevent shortages, but can help provide a greater buffer to ensure that Australian manufacturers are better placed to continue supply & identify alternative sources of supply where possible.

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## Power of peers

**DURING** the COVID-19 pandemic, discussions with peers played a large role in people's decisions around vaccination, new research from UNSW Sydney shows.

When COVID-19 vaccines became available in Australia, there was a flood of education and promotional campaigns encouraging people to get vaccinated.

But these messages from government and healthcare providers travelled slowly through some communities and didn't always resonate.

This contributed to vaccine hesitancy in some people.

The UNSW study, published in *Health Expectations*, explored the role of peer-to-peer communication in the vaccine rollout.

"Information about health is almost always top down - so received from govt agencies, health agencies and your doctor," said Joshua Karras, the lead author of the study.

"But peer-to-peer communication is when information is received from a friend, family member or other equal - a trusted source.

"So it can be quite powerful.

"After receiving the vaccine, people are more likely to become champions of it," Karras explained.

On the other hand, unvaccinated participants believed that peer-to-peer communication was not as important.

## Top six expand workforce

A **NATIONAL** leadership body has announced six successful recipients of the 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacist Scholarship, supported by a grant from Sanofi Australia.

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) shared that the six scholarship winners are Bryony Forrest, Chelsea Corbett, Jai-ann Eastaughffe, James Sowter, Jason Coleman and Macy Poke.

The Scholarship provides subsidies and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacy students and aims to build the First Nations pharmacist workforce.

2023 scholarship recipient, Jai-ann Eastaughffe commented, "I believe this scholarship will allow me to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in health and particularly within the pharmacy industry.

"The mentors and connections I make will be valuable as I enter my last year of the degree and prepare to enter the workforce.

"The scholarship will also help financially, as I complete my final six weeks of placement."

The scholarship program, which began in 2022 and expanded to six recipients this year is extended till 2025, demonstrating Sanofi's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"Our warmest congratulations to this year's recipients, the judging panel and the team at NACCHO for their ongoing leadership of this important scholarship program," said Karen Hood, Sanofi Australia and New Zealand Country Lead.



"Building the skills of future First Nations pharmacists is a crucial part of ensuring that pharmacy and pharmacists can support culturally safe care.

"We have been enormously impressed by NACCHO and the judging panel's leadership of this program and couldn't be more pleased to confirm our expanded, support," affirmed Hood.

Dr Dawn Casey, NACCHO Deputy CEO noted that "this year's scholarship recipients are impressive young Aboriginal students we are so proud to provide these opportunities to".

According to Health and census data, out of a total of 27,000 pharmacists in Australia, only 85 identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, representing just 0.3% of the pharmacist workforce.

Currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the health sector account for only 1.8% of the total health workforce, despite accounting for 3.2% of the Australian population.

## Double life span

**MANY** Australians with a deadly blood and bone marrow cancer could have their life-expectancy doubled if a one-off procedure was widely available.

This is the finding of a report, by health advisory firm Evohealth, about a treatment where a person's own immune cells (T-cells) are extracted and reprogrammed to seek out and destroy cancer cells when returned to the body.

Research shows that each of these CAR T-cells can kill 1,000 cancer cells.

The *CAR T-cell therapy: Is Australia ready, willing and able?* report concludes that if the full potential of CAR T-cell therapy was realised for all Australian multiple myeloma patients early in the disease course, it has the potential to prevent 886 deaths among the 2,625 Australians diagnosed with multiple myeloma last year alone.

There could be more than double life expectancy from seven to 15 years on average, and cancer progression delayed for an average of six years compared to 2.4 years with existing treatments.

Patient outcomes could be changed due to superior rates of response to treatment (up to 97%) and remission (no cancer progression in 77% of patients after 12 months).

All this makes for a possible 'functional cure', where the cancer is effectively dormant.

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## Dispensary Corner

**DRUGS** do no good in anyone's hands!

Red-faced California cops sold a suspected drugs trafficker a big packet of meth - then watched him drive off, in a sting operation that plainly went a bit wrong.

Undercover policemen in Riverside County near Los Angeles said they agreed to supply 27 kilograms of the illegal stimulant, in what they hoped would give them the proof they needed to get their man, reported *yahoo! news*.

But after handing over the cash and collecting his haul, the suspect apparently was not interested in hanging around to get arrested.

"After the transaction, the suspect drove away and deputies from the Gang Task Force attempted a vehicle stop," a press release from Riverside County Sheriff said of last month's operation.

"The suspect failed to yield, and a pursuit was initiated.

"Due to the high speeds and suspect's disregard for public safety, deputies lost sight of the vehicle."

The *Los Angeles Times* quoted defeated sheriff candidate Michael Lujan, a former captain in the department, as saying he had heard the drugs were worth around US\$35k (A\$51.6k).

"Why would you let someone get in their vehicle, I don't know," he said.

"It is pretty embarrassing.

"It's unfortunate because now we have additional narcotics out on the street."

## Opioid overdose alert on

NSW Health is warning of the potential dangers from a potent opioid (isotonitazene) detected in drugs in a yellow powder form on the NSW Central Coast.

The powder may be related to recent deaths which are under investigation.

Medical Director of the NSW Poisons Information Centre, Associate Professor Darren Roberts, said drugs containing a potent opioid such as isotonitazene can cause unexpected and severe overdose or death.

Nitazenes can be as strong, or stronger than fentanyl and may be more likely to affect breathing than other opioids.

"It's important people recognise the signs of an opioid overdose early and know how to respond.

"Taking the appropriate action

early can save a life," Roberts said.

"Opioid overdose symptoms can include pin-point pupils, drowsiness, loss of consciousness, slow breathing/snoring or skin turning blue or grey."

## Formula shaming

**SPROUT** Organic is urging the Australian government to revise the scope of the Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula Agreement, to promote inclusivity and respect for all feeding choices.

It believes that the 'breast is best' messaging needs to be revisited as formula shaming is a form of parent-shaming that can have a significant impact on new parents causing grief, guilt and feelings of inadequacy.



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## Guild Update

### Tonight's budget a test

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia says tonight's budget will be a test of the government's 60-day dispensing rules, after the Health Minister failed to guarantee no patient or pharmacy will be worse off.

Health Minister Mark Butler says all funding cuts to community pharmacies will be reinvested back into the sector.

However, Guild National President Trent Twomey, says the government's forecast of a loss of \$1.2 billion to pharmacy is wrong.

"The figure is more like \$3.5 billion being ripped out of community pharmacies," he said.

"No wonder the minister cannot guarantee no patient or pharmacy will be worse off.

"It's already failed its first test, but the biggest test will be when it comes into effect from Sep.

"How many pharmacies will close after the impact of this crazy policy is felt?

"How much worse off will patients be, when they start having to pay for services, that were previously covered by their pharmacist?

"And how much worse off will patients be when they need to get medicines late at night, but cannot find a pharmacy that's open, because of these changes?"

The Health Minister says he will "monitor" the situation.

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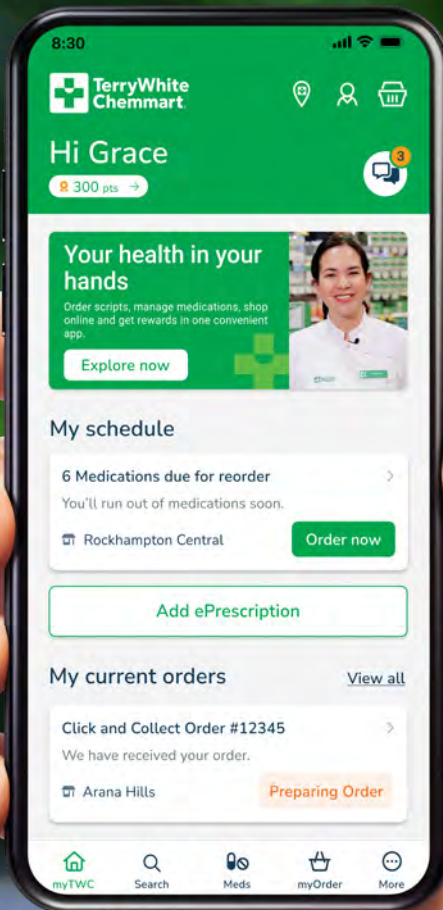
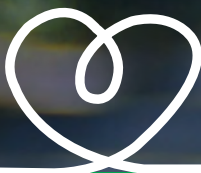
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