



## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from Willach.

## State of the art

**WILLACH'S** Consis C is the latest in pharmacy robotic automation and helps maximise storage capacity. See more on the **back page**.

## Back on shelves

**TRAVELLER'S** diarrhoea medication Travelan is back on pharmacy shelves after supplies to Australia were stopped during the COVID pandemic, says its manufacturer Immuron.

Chief Commercial Officer Flavio Palumbo said, "we aim to put Travelan in the forefront of people's minds and align it with the same importance as sun creams, sunhats and hand sanitisers as travel returns".

# Sigma accelerates its growth strategy

**SIGMA** Healthcare CEO Vikesh Ramsunder (**pictured**) yesterday pledged that he will grow sales revenue and meet targets for the group's 300 Amcal and 150 Discount Drug Stores (DDS) members over the medium term.

"This is an exciting time for Sigma," said Ramsunder, speaking to a gathering of more than 200 delegates at the 2023 Sigma Supplier Forum, held at the Glasshouse in Melbourne.

"The recent investment in our national distribution centre (DC) network shows we are ready to not only service the new Chemist Warehouse contract (**PD 06 Jun**), which begins in Jul 2024, but most importantly all of our existing customers and new brand members in the coming years," he told the Forum delegates.

"We have simplified our business, which has already delivered 10% productivity gains.

"From next year, we will begin to accelerate our roll-out of private and exclusive label products, which



will not only appeal to our price-conscious customers but also offer better margins for our pharmacies and Sigma."

The company's recent strong half-year results released in Sep (**PD 20 Sep**), which showed 7.5% revenue growth (like-for-like) and a 99% delivery in full to customers in the year to-date, was "good progress in delivering better results for member brands".

Aaron Ford, Chief Logistics Officer, talked about how Sigma is leveraging its investment in automation, facilities and technology to provide a fast, accurate flow of medicines and other pharmacy products to customers right across Australia. "The processes and capability we've focused on and demonstrated over the past 12 months, puts Sigma in a very strong position to absorb the additional volume for Chemist Warehouse in 2024 for the benefit of all Sigma customers," Ford explained. Kirsty Davis, Sigma's Chief

Commercial Officer, told delegates that Sigma was excited by its new omnichannel and digital sales growth strategy to support its branded stores, as well as upcoming enhancements to the Sigma Connect portal.

"Sigma is focused on operational support for our franchise partners to deliver on our compliance promise," Davis said.

"We are also committed to ensuring there is a match between supply and demand metrics to minimise waste and improve returns," she added.

Sue Price, Sigma's Head of Merchandise and Marketing, was optimistic explaining that Sigma's plans for private label expansion are "progressing well in its customer-led operating model, and we expect to generate improved margin growth for both Amcal and DDS stores".

"We will also expand our promotional marketing reach, both B2B and B2C, as we focus on our two key retail brands." JG

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### Bimzelx on PBS

UCB Australia's Bimzelx (bimekizumab) is now listed on the PBS for the treatment of patients with severe chronic plaque psoriasis.

The drug is approved by the TGA for the treatment of moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis in adult patients who are candidates for systemic therapy or phototherapy.

Bimekizumab is the first approved psoriasis treatment that is designed to selectively and directly inhibit IL-17A and IL-17F, two key cytokines driving inflammatory processes.

Dr John Frew, Staff Specialist Dermatologist, Liverpool Hospital, Sydney, and Senior lecturer, University of NSW, explained, "the pathogenesis of psoriasis involves inflammation driven by cytokines IL-17A and IL-17F".

Current psoriasis therapies only target IL-17A, leaving unopposed activation of IL-17F resulting in suboptimal clinical control, Frew added.

"Bimekizumab is the first dual IL-17A and IL-17F monoclonal antibody with proven efficacy in plaque psoriasis," he added.

"The availability of bimekizumab on the PBS will be a significant benefit for Australians suffering from plaque psoriasis and its comorbidities."

Bimekizumab's approval was based on the efficacy and safety data from the phase three plaque psoriasis clinical trial.

## Pharmacy frozen in time



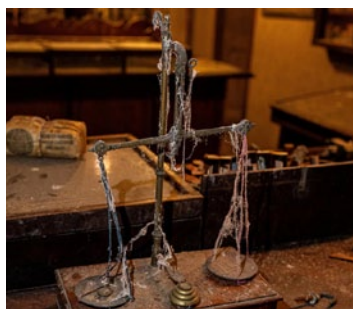
**STUNNING** photos have shown the inside of a Victorian pharmacy left untouched and re-discovered 80 years after being boarded up.

Now on display to the public, jars containing liquid medicines, weighing scales and a dusty old typewriter used for creating prescriptions and labels can be seen, among other items.

The chemist shop, based in Somerset, UK, belonged to William White, who operated the store from 1880 until his death in 1909.

It was only discovered after the death of the last of White's granddaughters, Margaret White, in 1987 - 80 years after it was closed.

After Ms White's death the property, in the village of South Petherton, was sold - which is when the hidden room was found.



Before that, the hidden pharmacy room had lain untouched and unknown for decades.

White's son, Charles, couldn't dispense drugs as he was unqualified, so he decided to close and board up the shop when his father died.

When the property was finally sold, 107 years after the White family had bought it, the secret room was revealed.

It looked exactly as White had left it when he died, as if it had been frozen in time.

When it heard about the amazing discovery, the Cornwall-based theme park, Flambards, decided to take on the difficult task of rescuing the shop, including numbering and charting thousands of artefacts, *Metro* has reported. JG



### Offtake agreement

ECS Botanics has secured a binding offtake agreement to supply medicinal cannabis dried flowers over the next five years to MediCann Health.

Under the Medicann Offtake Agreement, ECS will supply \$24 million of pharmaceutical-grade cannabis dried flower to Perth-based medicinal cannabis company MediCann Health beginning in Jan 2024.

Commenting on the agreement, ECS Managing Director Nan-Maree Schoerie said the company's expertise in cultivating and manufacturing cannabis, "inspires us to continue to provide outstanding medicine to companies such as MediCann".

"This agreement marks another milestone following our Jun agreements, totalling \$11.9 million.

"These partnerships highlight the strong local demand for our GMP-certified, pharmaceutical-grade cannabis and provide ECS with a solid foundation to continue to deliver profitable growth."

MediCann Founder and CEO, Matt Shales, added that it was rewarding to work closely with ECS over the past number of years and "we are delighted to strengthen our partnership and look forward to continuing our mission to improve the quality of life of people in need of these products and to continue to build on our partnership with ECS Botanics for the long term".

# "I doubled my front of shop sales in 2 years"

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## Dispensary Corner

**FIVE** fishermen, including a pair of local California men known for appearing on the reality TV series, *The Bachelorette*, are lucky to be alive after their boat sank last week off San Diego.

The anglers were rescued after nearly four hours in the water.

Aaron Schwartzman, a firefighter, and Brayden Bowers, a travel nurse, reportedly met while filming the 20th season of *The Bachelorette*, and they are both listed as contestants on the ninth season of *Bachelor in Paradise*, which is scheduled to air later this month.

In less than 60 seconds, the boat had gone under, according to the survivors, and the five men went into the Pacific, bobbing in heavy swells.

"You think of the next steps, but what are the next steps when you're 15 miles in the ocean in a wind swell?" said Schwartzman.

"We weren't able to send a distress signal at all.

"The only thing you have out there is hope."

Fortunately, the group of swimmers were military, dispatch, and medical professionals, all trained for emergencies.

Bowers said the five men locked arms and started kicking and paddling toward shore.

It had been about 3.5 hours before two tuna fishermen spotted a flash in the water.

"We were looking for yellowfin tuna, then found a school of men," the fisherman who rescued the struggling swimmers told Fox-5 TV.

## WHO approves affordable malaria vax

A **CHEAP** malaria vaccine that can be produced on a massive scale has been recommended for use by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The vaccine called R21 has been developed by the University of Oxford and is only the second malaria vaccine to be developed, *BBC* has reported.

Prof Sir Adrian Hill, Director of the Jenner Institute in Oxford, said, "the vaccine is easily deployable, cost-effective, affordable and ready for distribution in areas where it is needed most".

Malaria kills mostly babies and infants and has been one of the biggest scourges on humanity.

It has been almost two years to the day since the first vaccine called RTS,S was developed by pharmaceutical company GSK and also backed by the WHO.

The WHO said the effectiveness of



the two vaccines was "very similar" and there was no evidence one was better than the other.

However, the key difference is the ability to manufacture the University of Oxford vaccine R21 at scale, reported the news outlet.

The world's largest vaccine manufacturer, the Serum Institute of India, is already lined up to make more than 100 million doses a year and has plans to scale up to 200 million doses a year.

The WHO has stated that so far there are only 18 million doses of

RTS,S, adding that the new R21 vaccine would be a "vital additional tool" for the serious disease.

Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus (**pictured**), Director-General of the WHO, said it was a moment of "great pleasure" for the implementation.

"I used to dream of the day we would have a safe and effective vaccine against malaria, now we have two," he said.

Each dose costs US\$2-4 (A\$3-\$6) and four doses are needed per person; that is currently about half the price of RTS,S.

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO Regional Director for Africa, added, "this second vaccine holds real potential to close the huge demand-and-supply gap".

"The two vaccines can help bolster malaria prevention & control efforts and save hundreds of thousands of young lives." JG

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email [newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au)

### Hartley's Gripe Water

Hartley's Gripe Water is a natural blend of herbal ingredients of Dill Seed Oil, Peppermint Oil, Chamomile and Coriander Oil. These herbs have been used safely in commercial infant preparations for many years.

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# Time to rethink your dispensary set-up?

## CONSIS.C

### The latest in pharmacy robotic automation

The CONSIS C uses state-of-the-art technology in all areas of operations, from the user and control software to the mechanical and electronic components.

The sophisticated design maximises storage capacity, the dual lane feeder system speeds up loading, whilst inbuilt sensors and cameras offer peace of mind with advanced diagnostic support.



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