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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of pharmacy news, plus a full page from Chemsave.

AMA fights fatigue

THE Australian Medical Association (AMA) is urging Australians to fight "vaccine fatigue" and book both flu and COVID booster shots.

"I know it can be tiring keeping up to date with flu shots after receiving several rounds of the COVID vaccine, but it is absolutely the best and easiest way to protect yourself and the ones you love from serious illness," AMA President Professor Steve Robson said, adding both shots can be done on the same day.

People who are at risk of complications, including the elderly, are eligible for free vaccines through the National Immunisation Program.

WA group stocks vapes

EXCLUSIVE

IN WESTERN Australia, Michael's Chemist Group has started stocking therapeutic Nicotine Vaping Products (NVPs), pursuant to the Federal Government's new vaping laws (PD 25 Mar).

With these products now stocked across the Group's locations in Wembley, Claremont, and North Perth, Michael's stated it is well placed to help people quit smoking, if they have obtained a script from a medical professional.

When asked about the Group's decision to begin stocking NVPs, owner Michael Spartalis said the business takes its role as trusted health professionals seriously.

"It's not just a business decision - we see NVPs as a genuine way to help people quit smoking and reduce smoking rates within our community," Spartalis told PD.

"The ranging of NVPs in our stores means we are able to offer another option for smokers who have tried to quit using other products on

the market but have not been successful," he added.

Michael's Chemist Group is carrying the Wild by Instinct range of NVPs, one of just seven brands included in the TGA's new online Vaping Hub.

The TGA portal includes a list of products that are in compliance with applicable standards for supply in Australia.

"We chose the Wild by Instinct NVP range primarily because we were looking for Australian-made, TGO110 standard products, along with exceptional customer service and support, and it ticked all the boxes," he explained.

Although NVP prescriptions are uncharted territory for some pharmacists, Spartalis said navigating the new prescription process was surprisingly simple.

"The process is now easier because we're able to hold stock instore, unlike medical cannabis, and so, meet the needs of our customers immediately," he said.

Spartalis said it's important that more pharmacies begin to stock NVPs for the Government's prescription model to be effective.

He expects demand to increase as vapers and those wishing to quit smoking move to the prescription model, away from purchasing black market vapes.

"Put simply, we need more nurses and GPs prescribing, and more pharmacies offering these products to ensure we can get people away from harmful tobacco smoking, and have a positive impact on the health of our community," concluded Spartalis. JG

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Qld Pilot delivers

SEVERAL community pharmacies have begun providing services to patients under the Queensland Community Scope of Practice Pilot (PD breaking news Wed).

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Qld President Shane MacDonald welcomed the announcement, saying, "the 2020 election commitment to work with PSA, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, and other stakeholders to implement this pilot is finally being realised".

Under the pilot, community pharmacists who have completed the relevant training can offer additional healthcare services to patients for 22 conditions, including school sores, shingles, mild psoriasis, wound management, swimmer's ear, travel health and hypertension, and more.

"We must also acknowledge the pioneering pharmacists who...have dedicated themselves to undertake the extensive education program required to participate.

"Better utilising the skills and accessibility of pharmacists is a great outcome for all Queenslanders," he added.



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PDL

Dispensary Corner

IMAGINE being pulled over for drink driving and telling the police, "officer, I swear, it's just my body brewing its own beer!"

That might sound like a wild excuse, but for one Belgian man, it was the truth.

He was acquitted of drunk-driving charges recently because he suffers from auto-brewery syndrome (ABS), a rare condition where his body acts like an internal brewery, producing alcohol on its own.

What's even more comical? He works at a brewery.

His lawyer, Anse Ghesquiere, shared this frothy tale, revealing that not one, but three doctors had independently confirmed his ABS diagnosis.

Despite his body's natural affinity for alcohol production, Belgian media reported that the presiding judge noted the man did not display much typical drunken behaviour during the incident.

Meanwhile, Lisa Florin, a clinical biologist, provided some scientific insight.

She explained that while people with ABS do produce the same alcohol as in beverages, they often don't feel its effects as intensely.

ABS isn't something you're born with but can develop through other intestinal issues.

Symptoms are akin to those of a heavy night out and can include everything from slurred speech and stumbling to an unintentional belch.

So, next time you're at a party, spare a thought for the guy who brings new meaning to "brewing up a storm" from within.

Fujitsu to protect against cyber threats

FUJITSU has launched its new Trans-Tasman division, Cyber Security Services, to address growing online threats within the healthcare sector.

The new division will focus on enhancing cyber defences to protect valuable patient data and intellectual property, which are increasingly targeted by criminals.

Stuart Kilduff (pictured), Head of Fujitsu Cyber Security Services, explained the critical need for robust cybersecurity measures in healthcare, including pharmacies.

"The healthcare industry as well as pharmacies are increasingly under attack from cyber criminals," Kilduff told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"These criminals are drawn to the valuable patient information data and intellectual property within the industry, and the ease of hacking



many connected medical devices."

Kilduff said that the company will bring together a team of over 300 data and security specialists who will work to enhance the "security posture of hospitals and pharmacies, and improve their resilience against threats such as data theft on the dark web and insecure cloud services".

Fujitsu Cyber Security Services stated it can offer pharmacies services such as a security assessment for Microsoft 365.

It can also conduct an 'Essential

Eight', a controls implementation assessment against eight controls that may mitigate most material security incidents, as identified by the Australian Signals Directorate.

Further, Kilduff outlined the components of an effective cybersecurity strategy.

"It's crucial for public and private healthcare providers to investigate their supply chains and prioritise a strong cybersecurity plan," he said.

"A plan for pharmacies should include protecting data, testing networks and devices, regularly checking for security gaps, and training team members.

"By being proactive and using a layered security approach, pharmacies can better protect themselves from cyber threats, ensuring they can focus on patient care," Kilduff concluded. JG

Cardiac campaign

A RECENT Monash University-led project has identified Australian regions where more awareness is needed around avoiding and treating heart issues.

These high-risk local government areas - typically remote communities - recorded high rates of cardiac arrest and low rates of bystander CPR between 2017-2019.

Senior author Professor Janet Bray, from Monash University's School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, said the data highlights the importance of targeted education campaigns in these areas.

Bray said her research team is currently exploring which community-based approaches are best to improve outcomes.

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