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Today's issue of PD

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

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Faulty syringes

A PRODUCT Defect Correction was issued yesterday by Haleon Australia for 14 batches of its Panadol Children 1 Month - 1 Year paracetamol 100 mg/ml oral liquid bottle, stated the TGA.

The correction had to be made due to a defect in the dosing syringe, which may present as being overly stiff and challenging to operate.

To learn more [CLICK HERE](#).

Guild's ACCC submission

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has formally expressed its concerns regarding the potential merger between Sigma and Chemist Warehouse (PD 07 Dec 2023) to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

The Guild's detailed submission last week was followed up by discussions with the ACCC to elaborate on its stance.

In its communication, the Guild highlighted the unique nature of medicines, which it stated should not be treated as "ordinary items of commerce".

The statement underscored the long-standing community pharmacy model, which "prioritises patient care over profit", ensuring access to essential medications.

It also emphasised that limits on the number of pharmacies owned was crucial, due to the significant duty of care and clinical governance associated with handling and advising on medications.

While recognising the role



of franchising in supporting community pharmacies, the Guild cautioned against "increased corporatisation" within the pharmacy sector (PD 08 Dec 2023).

The body calls for vigilant regulatory scrutiny to ensure compliance with ownership laws which mandate pharmacist control over pharmacies.

Supporting recent legislative changes in Queensland (PD 25 Mar) and New South Wales, the Guild pointed to widespread bipartisan approval for these measures.

The body stated these laws not only align with its views, but also affirmed the government's commitment to preserving access to high-quality healthcare through the community pharmacy network across urban and rural Australia. JG

MRNs extended

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has praised the decision to extend Medication Review Numbers (MRNs), ensuring that credentialed pharmacists can continue offering Medication Management Review (MMR) services amidst updates to the specialised system.

Announced yesterday by David Laffan, Assistant Secretary of the Pharmacy Branch at the Department of Health and Aged Care, the extension provides a 12-month period for pharmacists to transition to new credentials, including specialised ones for MMR and Aged Care.

The PSA will also recognise the expertise of practicing pharmacists through a pathway that aligns with the Accreditation Standards for study programs in MMR and Aged Care, administered by the Australian Pharmacy Council.

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Dispensary Corner

IS YOUR doctor female?
If so, it's been found that you could be less likely to die than if attended to by male doctors. A recent study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, involving over 800,000 people aged 65 and older, revealed that female patients treated by female physicians had slightly better survival rates within 30 days of treatment compared to those cared for by male physicians - 8.15% versus 8.38% mortality rates, respectively. Though the difference appears minor, researchers suggest that equalising these outcomes could potentially prevent up to 5,000 deaths among women annually. The researchers state that this seems to be because male doctors are potentially underestimating the ailments of female patients. While it is easier to talk to female doctors about those embarrassing issues especially during sensitive examinations.

Visas impact on HIV
A **MONASH** University expert warns that Australia's migration rules may undermine efforts to end the HIV epidemic by 2030. A/Prof Jason Ong from the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre noted that the requirement for migrants to keep medical expenses under \$51,000 over 10 years leads some HIV-positive people to opt for cheaper, less effective treatments. The policy could cause many to exceed the cost threshold, risking rejection of their residency applications and compromising health.

PBS listing for Verzenio

FROM 01 May, pharmacists will be able to dispense Verzenio (abemaciclib) through the PBS to treat Australian patients with an invasive form of early breast cancer that is at high risk of recurring after initial treatment. Eli Lilly's Verzenio is being reimbursed for women with the most common (HR+, HER2-) subtype of breast cancer, where they face a one-in-three chance of their cancer coming back, despite surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and ongoing hormone therapy. Breast cancer is the most common cancer for women, with 57 diagnosed with it daily. HR+/HER2- constitutes around 70% of all breast cancer cases. Verzenio inhibits proteins that promote cell growth, helping to

slow or stop the spread. The new listing is expected to benefit around 2,400 Australian patients per year. Without subsidy, patients may pay \$97k per course of treatment. *JG*

Rare risk of TTS
PHARMACEUTICAL giant AstraZeneca has accepted that its COVID-19 vaccine "can, in very rare cases, cause TTS [Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome]", according to legal documents submitted yesterday to the United Kingdom High Court. The AstraZeneca vaccine is no longer available in Australia from last month, as per ATAGI advice after it reviewed relevant evidence.

Guild Update

NIPVIP extended to Aged Care and Disability Homes
THE Guild has welcomed the Federal Government's recent announcement of changes to the National Immunisation Program Vaccinations in Pharmacy Program (NIPVIP). Community pharmacies can now provide offsite vaccinations for flu and other NIP vaccines in residential aged care facilities and disability homes. With a severe start to the 2024 flu season, the announcement couldn't come at a better time. Pharmacy Guild National Vice President Nick Panayiaris said the decision to enable community pharmacists to provide free crucial vaccinations at aged care facilities under the NIPVIP will undoubtedly save lives. "A flu vaccination reduces the likelihood of hospitalisation by nearly 70%," he said. "The Guild will always champion healthcare policy that delivers for patients by increasing accessibility and affordability of healthcare." The Mar quarter has seen the highest number of flu cases recorded, up 40% compared with the same time last year. Updated NIPVIP rules will soon be published on the Pharmacy Programs Administrator website. To learn more **CLICK HERE**.

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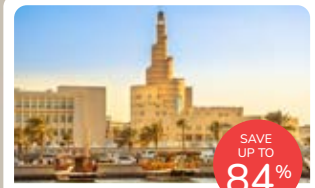
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