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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news and full pages from:

- Glucojel
- APP 2024
- Wizard Pharmacy

PDL on UTIs in SA

SOUTH Australian pharmacists will soon be able to dispense antibiotic treatment without a prescription for uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) to all patients who meet certain criteria.

Beginning 01 Mar, pharmacists who complete the training are authorised to supply the approved antibiotics, with the service coming into full effect straight away, rather than being a trial.

Prior to offering this service, the Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) have advised that pharmacists must confirm their insurance coverage, complete an approved training program, and familiarise themselves with sale, supply and documentation requirements as needed.

Pharmacists also need to have unconditional general registration with Ahpra, offer the service from a PRASA-registered pharmacy, ensure they are familiar with the UTI Management Protocol and comply with other legislation.

See more information [HERE](#).

Influencer-led campaign

THE Federal Government is launching today a new influencer-led youth vaping campaign to spark a conversation with the next generation of Australians about the significant harms of vaping and nicotine addiction.

With the next stage of import restrictions on vape products just days away, several influencers popular with 14 to 20-year-olds will be engaged to combat the misinformation on social media, awash with pro-vaping content.

The influencers span the arenas of gaming, comedy, sport and other lifestyle interests and include Ellyse Perry, Ella Watkins, Jack Buzza, Fairbairn Brothers, Zahlia and Shyla Short, Sam Fricker, Lottie Dalziel and HeyImZed.

Some have experienced the dangers of vaping and nicotine addiction firsthand, like junior professional surfers Zahlia and Shyla Short from Wollongong, who have both supported a family member to quit vaping.

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said, "there is an enormous amount of misinformation and online advertising designed to lure teenagers into vaping".

TikTok is home to more than 18 billion posts with the hashtag #vape and Instagram is home to more than 18,000 'vaping influencer' profiles solely dedicated to promoting vaping, the Health Department revealed.

"Together with the Albanese Government's world-leading vaping reforms, education is a key step to stopping big tobacco companies

from luring a new generation into nicotine dependency," he said.

"It's pretty clear that teenagers don't watch TV or listen to Health Ministers, much as I might like them to, which is why we've partnered with influencers that young people listen to: from comedians, to sports stars and gamers, and everyone in between."

Cricketer Ellyse Perry said, "lending my voice to such a critical health issue is important, as a professional athlete I know that even occasional vape use would have significant consequences for both mental and physical performance on and off the field".

Gamer and comedian Jack Buzza said he has stepped up to help as he knows in the gaming and content space, "a lot of young people vape without understanding the health consequences of that choice, including the addictive nature of vaping".

Junior professional surfer Zahlia Short added, "as young women, we witness on a regular basis our friends and dear ones be tempted by vaping".

"Not only do we worry about the health concerns, but we also worry about the environmental concerns.

"The ocean is our second home, and it is also now being affected by vapes," said Short.

"It is time for everyone to be aware of how vaping affects your health and the environment."

The campaign will use platforms such as Spotify and 'Year13', ahead of the next set of regulations to come into effect from 01 Mar. *JG*

Carry Naloxone

NSW Health is warning of the danger of using drugs such as cocaine or methamphetamine, after 11 recent severe opioid overdoses in people believed to be using the drugs.

It advised that heroin was the opioid identified in the eight overdoses where samples were available.

The warning follows a public health alert in Nov last year, where three similar instances of overdose were linked to heroin contamination.

NSW Poisons Information Centre Medical Director, Dr Darren Roberts, said drugs unexpectedly containing opioids can cause severe overdose or death.

"Opioid overdoses can quickly result from a single line or point," Dr Roberts said.

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

"In light of this detection, people who use drugs or opioids should carry naloxone." Naloxone should be given immediately if available, stated NSW Health.

Naloxone is an important life-saving medication that reverses the effects of opioids.

It does not require a prescription and is free for anyone at risk of opioid overdose, stated NSW Health.

It is available as an easy to use nasal spray or injection from some pharmacies.

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Shingles spotlight

THIS Shingles Awareness Week (26 Feb to 3 Mar), new research sheds light on Australians' limited understanding of shingles, highlighting an important opportunity for healthcare professionals to dispel common misconceptions.

Knowledge gaps and misconceptions held by Australians about the cause, signs, symptoms and impact of the disease have been identified through two recent surveys: a GSK Australia survey and a GSK global Misconceptions Survey.

Many Australians incorrectly believe that having had chickenpox earlier and leading a healthy lifestyle results in a low risk of shingles, uncovered the survey (*PD* 03 Oct 2023).

GSK's Shingrix (Recombinant Varicella Zoster Virus glycoprotein E antigen (AS01B adjuvanted vaccine)) was listed on the National Immunisation Program for the prevention of herpes zoster and post-herpetic neuralgia in Australia on 01 Nov 2023.

Over 487,000 doses of Shingrix have already been administered to eligible patients in the first three months of the program.

Across Australia, there are approximately half a million doses of Shingrix available to be administered, with more due to come.

For more information about shingles, [CLICK HERE](#).

TWC elevates its message to partners

TERRYWHITE Chemmart (TWC) announced significant updates to its loyalty program, REWARDS Plus, and strengthening its commitment to pharmacists' expanded scope of practice yesterday at its national conference, Elevate.

Consumers will soon be able to earn loyalty points on a range of health-based activities, along with increased opportunities for everyday product purchases.

The national conference was attended by over 700 delegates, who heard the brand's key message to, keep focus on what is in their control, by providing exceptional care to every customer, and embrace advancing technologies, along with the opportunities presented by the increase in the scope of practice.

Executive General Manager Nick Munroe opened the conference by stating, "we are focusing our collective efforts on elevating the customer experience and supporting our network of pharmacists to practice at the top of their scope".

"The evolution of community pharmacy over the next few years will be a defining moment, and pharmacists have a critical role in supporting the delivery of primary healthcare for Australians."

Support for the Queensland Community Pharmacy Pilot Program was evident as the brand showcased financial modelling for the new services, updates to standards for its CareClinic rooms, and an enhanced in-store presence.

Also unveiled to delegates were the brand's marketing messages



and campaign for the pilot program, defining its benefits for Australian patients.

Munroe commented that the investment in continuous improvement across the brand's digital platforms was critical for future success, and the enhancements to the REWARDS Plus program, combined with other recent digital customer offerings, provides a strong framework to support customers who want to shop online and instore.

"Our focus is to continue to provide our network of pharmacies the most integrated digital solution for their customers," he added.

"REWARDS Plus is another step forward, and combined with the myTWC app, provides consumers with a connected digital solution to support their health needs."

He also made a commitment to supporting a continued focus on improving digital efficiency in the back-end for pharmacies, with further investment in systems capability to improve dispensary efficiency, stronger buying capability, and inventory best-practices, including a trial of digital shelf ticketing.

"With the increasing focus on providing more services, the need for efficiency in systems has never been greater.

"Our BuyBetter system is supporting efficiency in inventory control, improving pharmacy profitability, and the trial of digital shelf-ticketing has shown early signs of productivity improvements which will be rolled out further."

Guild Pharmacy of the Year winner and owner of TerryWhite Chemmart Goondiwindi, Lucy Walker, said that it was exciting to see the brand's leadership in the evolving space, and while juggling further study was challenging, "learning and developing my skills to better serve my patients makes it all worthwhile".

"The Queensland Community Pharmacy Pilot Program will give patients access to healthcare for these conditions in a convenient way and support the growing needs of the broader system.

"I'm looking forward to being able to support my community in more ways, and of course, continuing to collaborate with my local GPs to ensure the best possible outcomes for our patients," Walker added. *JG*

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Dispensary Corner

HACKERS working for the 'Blackcat' ransomware gang are behind the outage at UnitedHealth's technology unit that has snarled prescription deliveries for six days, two people familiar with the matter told *Reuters* on Mon.

The problems began last week after hackers gained access to Change Healthcare's information technology systems and has led to disruptions at several pharmacies across the United States.

Blackcat is one of the most notorious of the internet's many ransomware gangs who encrypt data to hold it hostage with the aim of securing massive payouts worth millions of dollars.

It has previously struck major businesses including MGM Resorts International and Caesars Entertainment.

A number of pharmacy chains, including CVS Health and Walgreens, have said the outage had knock-on effects on their businesses.

The American Pharmacists Association said many pharmacies across the nation could not transmit insurance claims for their patients following the hack.

It said pharmacies were reporting "significant backlogs of prescriptions," which they were unable to process.

Investigations into the cyber attack are continuing.



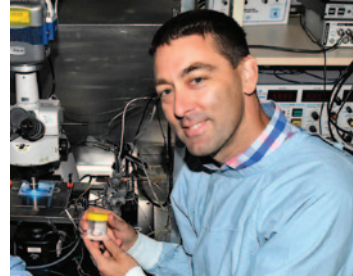
Study on gut brain axis to affect drugs

THE mechanisms by which antidepressants and other emotion-focused medications work could be reconsidered due to a new understanding of how the gut communicates with the brain.

The research led by Flinders University has uncovered a new development which could have a "profound impact" on the make-up and use of common medications such as antidepressants.

Prof Nick Spencer (pictured) from the university's College of Medicine and Public Health said, "as part of the gut-brain axis, vagal sensory nerves relay a variety of signals from the gut to the brain that play an important role in mental health and wellbeing".

"The mechanisms by which vagal sensory nerve endings in the gut wall are activated has been a



major mystery but remains of great interest to medical science and potential treatments for mental health and wellbeing."

Serotonin is a major hormone and neurotransmitter in the body and has been shown to play a significant role in a range of bodily functions, including mental health and depression.

"The results of our new research uncovered that any substances (including serotonin) released mostly

from enteroendocrine cells (EEC) must communicate via a process of diffusion to the sensory nerve endings of the vagus nerve, that lie in the colon or large intestine.

"This is a major discovery for our understanding of gut-brain communication which has profound implications for drug developments, treatments of anxiety and depression and other digestive problems such as irritable bowel syndrome, all of which involve serotonin in some way, and the use of selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, a common type of antidepressant," Spencer said.

The study, 'Identification of vagal afferents nerve endings in the mouse colon and their spatial relationship with enterochromaffin cells', was published in *Cell and Tissue Research* **HERE**. JG

Health Dept partners with Google Cloud

THE Australian Department of Health & Aged Care has partnered with Google Cloud to consolidate its data assets for greater regulatory compliance, and cost savings.

Following a competitive tendering process, the Department stated it selected Google Cloud based on its compliance and security credentials, including Certified Strategic Status for cloud services.

Platform-level implementation of zero-trust security and data sovereignty controls was another key reason, as well as the speed and scalability of its analytics capabilities, and Google's commitment to open standards.

The Department will initially migrate its Hadoop workloads to Google Cloud Platform before unifying data assets from a range

of internal sources on a single repository managed by BigQuery.

"Consolidating the Department's data and analytics capabilities has the potential to generate substantial savings while further bolstering compliance and security across sensitive national healthcare data - both key themes for the Australian Government's long-term digital strategy," said Brian Senior, Director, Public Sector, Google Cloud ANZ.

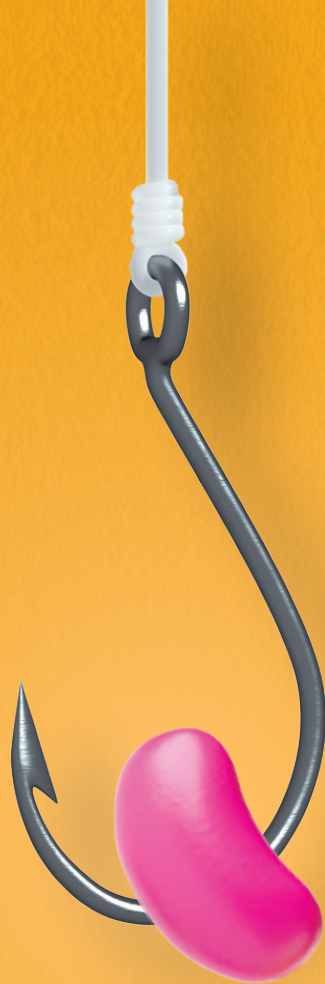
"We're delighted the Health Department has selected Google Cloud to help govern and secure citizens' personal data against increasingly sophisticated threats, while also creating a more conducive environment for digital innovation and skills development within Australia's public sector," he added.

MS gene study on

AUSTRALIAN research to uncover the genes that could repair the damage inflicted by multiple sclerosis (MS) will soon be underway.

One of 17 cutting-edge projects to receive funding today from MS Australia's latest \$4.5m grant round, the research has the potential to provide significant clues about how progression works at a genetic level, with the ultimate aim of slowing the disease progression in people with MS.

A/Prof Justin Rubio, from The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health will spearhead the project and will integrate various genomic data sources, to discover genes involved in progressive MS and how they fit into the MS puzzle.



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So, if you want feet through your door, you need Glucojel on your shelves.

*Source: Bliss Mobile post campaign reporting



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