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Today's issue of PD

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

Glucojel boost

GLUCOJEL, the original jelly bean from GoldCross, has been around for 80 years and is a top-selling confectionery that increases sales in pharmacies. See more on the [back page](#).

Free JE vaccine

NSW Health is reminding people to protect themselves from mosquitoes with a free vaccine for Japanese encephalitis (JE).

Acting Director of Environmental Health Paul Byleveld warned that "mosquitoes in NSW can carry viruses such as JE, Murray Valley encephalitis, Kunjin, Ross River and Barmah Forest".

"Health crisis" with opioid shortages

TODAY, Palliative Care Australia chief executive Camilla Rowland said a "health crisis" was looming, and sick children, the dying and those with chronic pain would be hurt the most, as the number of opioid pain meds in shortage grows.

An estimated 270,000 scripts of the discontinued drugs are filled each year, meaning options for thousands of Australians have been limited, *ABC News* has reported.

Health groups have called on Federal Health Minister Mark Butler to force pharma companies to extend notice of discontinuations from six to 12 months, consult with clinicians, review processes so alternatives can get PBS listing quickly and proactively look for alternative products.

The Australia and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine president Michelle Gold said it was hard to understand why the medicines had been discontinued at short notice.

"These medications perhaps



aren't coming off patent or not making sufficient income for the company," she said.

Gold said she was concerned by the lack of social responsibility from companies that received millions in tax-payers funds.

"Surely they should have some moral obligation to ensure that people are not left without essential medications simply because a product becomes less profitable," she remarked.

MundiPharma, which supplies the medicines, said in a statement that the products were withdrawn "after careful consideration" and most had alternatives.

"This was a global business decision, based on the complexity of continuing to provide these products in certain markets," the company stated.

"With Ordine, Mundipharma is currently exploring all possible options and is still seeking continuation of Ordine for Australian patients."

The issue was discussed at a medicines shortage action group meeting and the TGA has approved a temporary supply of overseas equivalents for medicines such as Ordine, Jurnista and Dilaudid.

The TGA added substitutes for Oxynorm, MS Mono and Sevredol were being considered.

"The TGA will meet with affected groups in early 2024 to discuss issues relating to these discontinuations," it commented.

"We are also continuing to discuss the longer-term supply of Australian-registered alternatives to these discontinued products with other sponsors." JG

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Dispensary Corner

A PAIR of French pizza chefs teamed up with a cheesemaker and a YouTube star to create a artery-clogging pizza featuring 1,001 different types of cheese.

Chefs Benoit Bruel and Fabien Montellanico worked with cheesemaker Sophie Hatat Richard-Luna and YouTuber Florian OnAir to break the Guinness World Record for the most cheese types on a pizza.

Bruel had set the record at 254 cheeses in 2020, but his record was later broken by Morgan Niquet, who cooked a heart-attack-inducing pizza topped with 834 varieties of cheese.

The team's new pizza also took the record for the largest display of cheese varieties, which was previously set at 730 by fellow Frenchman Philippe Marchand in 2016.

Bruel said 940 of the pungent pie's cheeses came from France, while the others were sourced from around the world.

"I have been a pizza maker for 13 years," Bruel told *Guinness World Records*.

Bruel will certainly be increasing pharmacy dispensing of cholesterol meds worldwide as he added, "I invented my own pizza recipes, and since working in my own business, my only dream is to make pizzas with the widest variety of cheeses".



Southcity in NSW pilot

SOUTHCITY Pharmacy is one of 11 pharmacies in Wagga Wagga, NSW, participating in the 'Living Well, Your Way' pharmacy screening pilot, a joint initiative of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network and funded by the NSW Ministry of Health.



The aim of the pilot is to improve care for people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) in these communities.

Winner of the Guild's Pharmacy of the Year Award in 2018, Southcity's screening pilot is an important opportunity to assist with the early detection, identification and referral of patients suspected to have COPD and CHF, said its managing partner and pharmacist Luke van der Rijt (pictured).

Southcity pharmacy customers receive a "simple questionnaire to complete and potentially a micro spirometry test if we feel your lungs are at risk," added van der Rijt.

The pilot has been developed in consultation with pharmacists and general practice, and builds on the COPD screening he started in 2018.

All patients have their own shared care plan, starting with a sick day action plan. JG

"We are running a free screening pilot in 2024 to identify patients in our community who may be at increased risk of heart and lung conditions," said van der Rijt.

Lilly goes direct

DRUGMAKER Eli Lilly announced a new website that will allow patients to get a weight loss drug prescription through a telehealth provider in the US.

The new website, called LillyDirect, joins a growing list of platforms like WeightWatchers and Ro offering weight loss drugs through telehealth, but is the first of its kind from a pharmaceutical company.

LillyDirect will connect patients with the telehealth provider Form Health, whose obesity medicine doctors will work with patients to determine whether a prescription is appropriate.

"Our region unfortunately has some of the country's highest rates of preventable hospital admissions for these conditions.

"The idea for screening is that we identify people at risk and link them in with their GP for further medical assessment."

Early identification and treatment is key to getting on top of these conditions, he explained.

"Some symptoms we ask our customers to watch out for include waking up overnight with difficulty breathing, coughing several times on most days, using the blue reliever puffer every day or getting swollen ankles or feet often."

Licence pulled

PHARMACIST and luxury car lover Ben Huynh's pharmacy licence has been suspended as he faces allegations of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme fraud, *The Australian* reported last week.

It is the latest blow to Huynh, whose glamorous lifestyle was revealed in Nov after police seized a rumoured three Ferraris and one BMW from his mansion in Sydney's Dural.

Huynh's wife, Le Thach, who founded the exclusive Supercars Club Australia, has said in a social media video she believed that the house was worth between \$10m and \$20m and the couple own an estimated \$8m worth of expensive cars.

The pharmacist was the proprietor of the Cabramatta East Day and Night Pharmacy for 26 years, and Thach documented their extravagant lifestyle across social media accounts which showed the couple travelling the world, buying supercars and attending exclusive events.

In Nov, Huynh, 56, appeared at the Downing Centre Local Court (**PD** 27 Nov), and court documents released to *The Australian* revealed the pharmacist had been charged with "obtaining a financial advantage by deception".

Police alleged he submitted false claims for medications under the PBS that were not prescribed by a medical practitioner and not supplied to a patient.

It is unclear how much Huynh is alleged to have defrauded, but if convicted he could face up to 10 years in jail.

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