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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus full pages from:

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Designs that suit

PHARMACIUM designs spaces that dovetail into the way you work to improve efficiency in your pharmacy. See more on **page four**.

HyQvia approval

TAKEDA today announced that the US Food and Drug Administration has approved HyQvia for the treatment of chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy as maintenance therapy to prevent the relapse of neuromuscular disability and impairment in adults, with approval based on the phase 3 ADVANCE-CIDP 1 Study.

Sale of Telstra Health on

SECURE messaging company HealthLink has acquired the pharmacy-used Telstra Health's secure messaging and eReferrals portfolio, which includes the Argus secure messaging service and the ConnectingCare web-based eReferrals delivery platform, reported *Pulse+IT*.

Telstra Health and HealthLink have aimed to set up a transition plan to ensure users face "no disruption" to services or support.

A Telstra Health spokesperson said Argus users will receive the same level of support through HealthLink, including access to the HealthLink nationwide network.

"They can also anticipate benefits from HealthLink's substantial investments in its technology platforms, particularly in API and FHIR-based messaging solutions," the spokesperson said.

In addition, HealthLink has provided its secure messaging, eReferral and SmartForms solutions for NSW Health's Engage



Outpatients program, the My Aged Care eReferral SmartForm, and the SA Health statewide eReferrals program.

Owner of HealthLink, Clanwilliam Australia's Managing Director Dave Young, told the publication his priority was to ensure a seamless transition for new customers.

"We are committed to maintaining the high standards and quality of service that they are used to, as well as offering new and innovative solutions to our expanded customer base," Young said in a statement.

"The company is investing substantially in our technology platforms, particularly in API and FHIR-based messaging solutions, strategically aligning ourselves with national digital health strategies." *JG*

Measles alert

NSW Health has one confirmed case of measles in a nine-month-old infant who was infectious while visiting some locations in Sydney.

People may also have been exposed to the case in the following locations: Emirates flight EK416 from Dubai to Sydney on 10 Jan at 6:36pm; Sydney Airport Terminal 1 International Arrivals (including baggage claim and customs) between 6:36-9:00pm; and Five Star Coffee and Nuts Lakemba on 12 Jan, between 3:00-5:00pm.

Sydney Local Health District's Clinical Director of Public Health Dr Leena Gupta said while these locations pose no ongoing risk, "symptoms to watch out for include fever, sore eyes and a cough, usually followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy rash that spreads from the head to the rest of the body".

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Cervical self-tests grow

THE Federal Govt has expanded eligibility for a new self-collected cervical screening test in Jul 2022, resulting in a 25-fold increase in people doing their own tests.

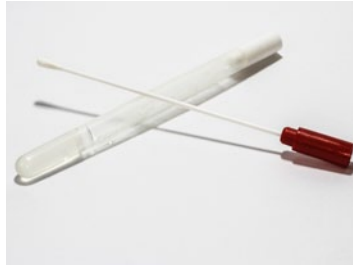
In the last financial year, many thousands of self-collected tests were done by people who had never been screened or were overdue for a test, reported *SMH*.

From 2018 to 2020, the participation rate for cervical screening was 68%, according to preliminary data by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Before July 2022, self-collected cervical screening tests were available to only a limited number of people.

About 70% of the 800 women diagnosed with cervical cancer in Australia annually have never undergone a cervical screening test or were overdue for one, according to the Federal Health Department.

However, Professor Marion Saville, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for the



Prevention of Cervical Cancer, said technology advancements had made it possible to offer a self-test to anyone eligible for screening, as such tests are now just as accurate as those done by a doctor.

"Of course, acceptability is not going to be 100% with self-collection either," Saville said.

"But it is the best tool we've had in more than 20 years in my time of working in this program [to] really reach the people we need to reach," he added.

Those eligible for self-screening are women or people with a cervix aged between 25 and 74 who have had any type of sexual contact. *JG*

Sukin brand changes hands from BWX

BWX, the debt-heavy beauty company that collapsed into administration almost a year ago, has sold its high-profile Sukin brand, selling it to an entity controlled by its former chief executive, *AFR* has reported.

KPMG, BWX's receivers, said last week that PNB Consolidated, a vehicle run by John Humble, would buy Sukin and the company's Melbourne manufacturing facility, paying around \$70 million for the assets.

The auction's final stage had Humble competing with pharma billionaire Dennis Bastas, *AFR* reported late last year.

Earlier in the process, private equity giant TPG Capital, via its iNova Pharmaceuticals business, had wanted to buy the assets.

During the sale process, Sukin was pitched as a leading brand founded in 2007 and now with a 90% distribution penetration and a spot in grocery and pharmacy aisles nationwide.



The manufacturing facility has a capacity of 70 million units across four lines that can handle bottles, jars and tubes.

Interested parties were told the facility was new, and \$34 million had already been invested into the asset.

The sale of Sukin and the manufacturing plant leaves BWX's US operations, a marginal part of the business, which is still up for sale via KPMG.

While the auction played out, Commonwealth Bank has been waiting to recoup about \$120m it had extended to BWX.

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Dispensary Corner

THE drug that took the world by storm is back in the news, with an unexpected side effect.

Swedish neuroscientists have demonstrated that semaglutide can reduce alcohol relapses in rodents, while two new research papers published in *eBioMedicine* described similar benefits in humans.

When researchers at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Centre monitored the progress of six patients with alcohol use disorder, who had been prescribed semaglutide, they observed a significant reduction in their drinking.

"This is the first confirmed improvement in alcohol use disorder symptoms in humans," said Prof Jesse Richards who led the interesting study.

"Probably the most fascinating finding was that even the lowest dose [of semaglutide], the baby starter, quarter of a milligram dose, actually showed some quite significant reduction, probably about 70% of the alcohol use disorder symptoms," said Richards.

ED nitrates combo risky

COMBINING erectile dysfunction (ED) medicines (such as Viagra, Levitra, and Cialis) with a common chest pain medication (nitrate) may increase the risk of death, according to a team of international researchers.

They added that these meds are often prescribed together, despite the combination of medicines not being recommended.

The researchers looked at Swedish national data including 55,777 men with heart issues who were treated with nitrates and 5,710 who received both nitrates and ED medication.

They found those prescribed both medications experienced a greater overall risk of death from any cause, and death from cardiovascular issues.

An accompanying editorial from the American College of Cardiology has stated these results, combined with previous studies that did not find a higher risk, indicate professionals should continue to consider the drug combination as ill-advised but discuss the risks with patients in cases where the combinations are required.

"Physicians are seeing an increase of requests for erectile dysfunction drugs from men with

cardiovascular diseases," said A/Prof Daniel Peter Andersson at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm and senior author of the study.

"While there is a positive association of ED medication for men with cardiovascular diseases (CVD), patients taking nitrates may experience an increased risk of negative health outcomes."

The results of the study indicate that the combined use of Phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors (PDE5i) treatment or ED medications with nitrates is associated with a higher risk for all health outcomes compared to those taking nitrates alone.

In those taking both PDE5i and nitrates, few events occurred 28 days after dispensing the PDE5i, with lower incidence rates than in subjects taking only nitrates, indicating that there is a low immediate risk for an event.

"Our over-arching goal is to underscore the need for careful patient-centred consideration before prescribing PDE5i medication to men receiving nitrate treatment," said Andersson.

"Furthermore, it justifies our efforts for continued research into the ambiguous effects of ED drugs on men with CVD." JG

Strong results

ECS Botanics Holdings Ltd (ECS), an Australian medicinal cannabis cultivator and manufacturer, has reported record sales for the quarter ending 31 Dec 2023.

The company achieved a revenue of \$7.3 million, marking a substantial 78% increase from the prior corresponding period.

The growth was attributed to increased sales of oils and flowers from existing customers, as well as the addition of two new key customers to ECS' client base.

Additionally, ECS expanded its cultivation area by 60%, with new fields and a dedicated section for CBD biomass.

This expansion is expected to significantly increase annual production capacity and reduce operating costs.

The company also undertook an R&D project resulting in an investment in additional heating and lighting for four Protective Cropping Enclosures to help double the yield in these areas.

ECS had a positive operating cash flow of \$321,000 and a cash balance of \$2.6 million.

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