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## Today's issue of PD

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

- Dispense Assist
- Nova Pharmaceuticals
- WholeLife Pharmacy

## Low-cost solution

**DISPENSE** Assist is a low-cost staffing solution with dispensary technicians available 24/7 at rates as low as \$6.14 per hour.

See more on **page four**.

## Saving with Nova

**NOVA** Pharmaceuticals is offering savings of 50% on its essential medications for winter to eligible pharmacies.

The deal includes a free display stand - see **page five**.

## Grow your base

**FOR** business growth with differentiation consider joining WholeLife Pharmacy and Healthfoods, as it has strategies to increase foot traffic- see more on **page six**.

## Concerns from vapes bill

**THE** vaping reforms bill passed in the Senate this week has raised significant questions around pharmacy insurance premiums, business risks and regulatory compliance for community pharmacists, according to the profession's peak body.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia's National Vice President Anthony Tassone said, "we are deeply disappointed that public policy has been developed in a vacuum without consultation prior to these amendments being passed".

"Pharmacists can only supply a schedule 3 medicine if there is an established therapeutic need.

"When we don't know the long-term effects of vapes on patient safety, how can a pharmacist make an informed decision?"

"No guidance or protocol exists for pharmacies to stock unregulated substances with no established therapeutic benefit."

Tassone added the amendments compromise community health and do not take into consideration the safety or efficacy of vapes as a smoking cessation device.

"Pharmacists are clinical healthcare professionals and community pharmacies do not



want to supply this potentially harmful, highly-addictive product without a prescription.

"Thanks to this secret, Greens-led deal, community pharmacies across Australia are being asked to supply nicotine-containing vapes without a prescription," Tassone commented.

The TerryWhite Chemmart, Priceline, National Pharmacies, Blooms The Chemist and Pharmacy 777, alongside thousands of independent pharmacies, have already expressed their opposition to nicotine-containing vapes being available without a prescription, with Blooms ruling out any deals to stock vapes across its store network.

Changes to the *Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024* will come into effect as early as Oct. *JG*

## CSO preferencing

**THE** Remote and Isolated Pharmacist Association Australia (RIPAA) has called for equitable distribution terms in the new Pharmaceutical Wholesaler Agreement currently being negotiated.

The RIPAA says the new deal must contain equitable terms for remote pharmacies to stop "outlaw wholesalers from diverting funds into commercial trading terms for their preferred customers".

The association said the federal govt must crack down on how taxpayer funds are being used to ensure greater transparency for the benefit of isolated communities.

"It is the worst-kept secret in the industry that wholesalers have for decades used CSO funds to underwrite selective preferential discounts to their pharmacy franchises which are overwhelmingly located in MM1-3," the association said.

The RIPAA said the proposed merger of Sigma by Chemist Warehouse is a clear example of how a major chain may use its bargaining power to obtain preferential distribution terms.



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## Monash study to bin butts

A COMBINATION of varenicline and nicotine lozenges may be a more effective treatment option for people looking to quit smoking compared to varenicline alone, according to results from a new clinical trial at Monash University.

Varenicline is currently the most effective single therapy, however the 'VANISH' clinical trial found combining this with mild nicotine replacement therapy such as lozenges led to an 84% increase in a participant maintaining a smoking abstinence 12 months later.

The Monash University study featured 320 adult daily smokers who had been admitted to five Australian public hospitals and was conducted by the University's Centre for Medicine Use and Safety (CMUS) in the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Hospitals featured in the trial included Eastern Health, Peninsula Health, Barwon Health and Monash Health in Vic, along with Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide.

Lead author Associate Professor Johnson George said the fact participants self-reported smoking abstinence at both the six-month and 12-month follow-ups means smokers now have an additional treatment option at their disposal, with larger clinical trials a next step.

"The COVID-19 pandemic limited our ability to measure biochemically validated abstinence; however, based on self-reported abstinence, the combination therapy was clearly the more effective option when compared with varenicline alone, with no compromise on safety," George said.



"As such, in the context of heavy smokers who continue to experience withdrawal symptoms when taking varenicline alone, based on our findings, it is certainly worth considering introducing nicotine lozenges to their treatment regimen," he added.

The study monitored heavy smokers who had been hospitalised due to their habit and how their lives would benefit if they quit. *ML*

### Earlybird expiring

ONLY three days remain for aspiring attendees of the 2024 Pharmacy Connect and Pharmacy Assistant conferences to secure earlybird tickets and save up to \$100.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register.

### Thursday delay

BUSINESS Publishing Group is aware of an issue with one of our platforms yesterday which caused some delays for a small number of our readers in receiving the newsletter.

The issue has now been resolved and we apologise for any inconvenience.

## NSW backing heart health sport goals

A \$150,000 grant from the NSW Government will be spent on raising awareness about heart health by encouraging community sport participation.

The #HeartHealthMatters campaign by The Heartbeat of Football Foundation recognises community sport as key to promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Funds will go, in part, towards 40 nurse-led heart health screening test activations at metro and regional sporting grounds in high-risk areas, of which 85% are in regional areas across all 10 NSW Govt areas.

The campaign will also support



supplementary government initiatives such as the Local Sport Defibrillator Program and Federal Budget relief programs such as GP bulk billing, hospital emergency department upgrades to support overall health and wellbeing in regional areas. *ML*

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## Dispensary Corner

**MUCH** like psychologists and social workers, pharmacists are also on the front line when it comes to mental health.

Many would argue the scourge of social media plays more than its fair share in the degeneration of mental stability, but very few in power appear to be willing to stand up to the sector's giants.

Enter American sausage company Johnsonville, which has kicked off a campaign, on social media no less, to make the platforms more positive places to interact.

The #KeepTheInternetJuicy movement draws on polling which shows 89% of Americans wish social media was less negative and promoted more positive, wholesome content.

The same poll found 81% of respondents agreed that trolling people online was a poor use of time and 92% said it was wrong to make people angry for fun.

Johnsonville has enlisted prominent US stars including actor Brian Baumgartner, best known from *The Office*, and Disney actress Tia Mowry to appear in a launch video.

At the heart of the campaign, Johnsonville aims to encourage social media companies to tweak their algorithms to amplify examples of human kindness and inspiring stories.

"#KeepTheInternetJuicy is about giving stories of human kindness their rightful share of the online spotlight because they inspire more human kindness," said Johnsonville Senior Director of Marketing, Jamie Schmelzer.

## Natural fix for anxiety goes very wrong

NSW Health is urging the community not to eat Uncle Frog's Mushroom Gummies after a spate of hospitalisations in the state.

The recall stems from the presence of unapproved ingredients including cordyceps and lion's mane in a batch, with the products marketed as anti-anxiety.

A range of symptoms, including anxiety, disturbing hallucinations, nausea and a racing pulse, have been attributed to the products, which until now were available online from overseas distributors.

Dr Ian Musgrave, a Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology at the University of Adelaide, said that despite the recall, both lion's mane fungus and cordyceps are fungi used in traditional Chinese medicine and are listed on the TGA's Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

He mentioned that the Uncle Frogs website, and associated Facebook page, have vanished, so finding out what was purportedly in them is not possible.

"I am working off screen shots



of the packets, but the ABC story reports the possibility of THC in the gummies, while the company claims there is no THC in the gummies from independent testing" Musgrave added.

Despite stating there is 'broad-spectrum hemp infusion' on the packets, the possibility that synthetic cannabinoids are present cannot be excluded at this stage.

"It is also possible that, instead of the stated fungal species, other

fungi have been inadvertently collected/substituted, which could have these effects," he said.

"Until proper analysis is conducted, it is not possible to say what has happened."

RMIT University's Professor of Chemistry, Oliver Jones, who conducts research in environmental toxicology, said, "I think the important message at this stage is that if you have bought these items, throw them away."

"If you have eaten these products, and feel ill, seek medical advice."

Jones added that supplements sold on the internet, especially from overseas, may not have been tested to the same Australian standards expected, and "we may not know where they came from, what ingredients they contain, or if they even do what they claim to".

"In a worst-case scenario, as we have seen today, they can even be potentially dangerous.

"It is also worth remembering that just because something is 'natural' does not automatically mean it is good for you. JG

## Flu on the rise, time to get vaccinated

**RATES** of influenza are increasing this flu season, and this is expected to continue in the coming weeks, according to Victoria's Department of Health.

In addition, 40% of flu cases have occurred in children aged six months to 14 years.

The flu is more likely to cause severe illness and complications in certain groups of people, including children aged under five, the elderly, pregnant women, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Pharmacists are urged to share



the message that "vaccination is key to protecting yourself, your friends, family and communities from the flu, and it is never too late to get vaccinated".

The annual flu vaccine is recommended for everyone aged six months and over, and is free for high-risk groups.

## Sun glare smart

**WITH** the school holidays approaching, customers should stay 'sun glare smart', amidst data suggesting road fatalities spiked 28% in the Apr school holidays, compared to figures for the same period last year.

Bupa Optical optometrist Karen Makin said high quality sunglasses are a must, as during winter the sun sits lower in the sky, resulting in more glare in the eyes and exposure to UV rays, which are intensified by reflections off wet surfaces after it rains.



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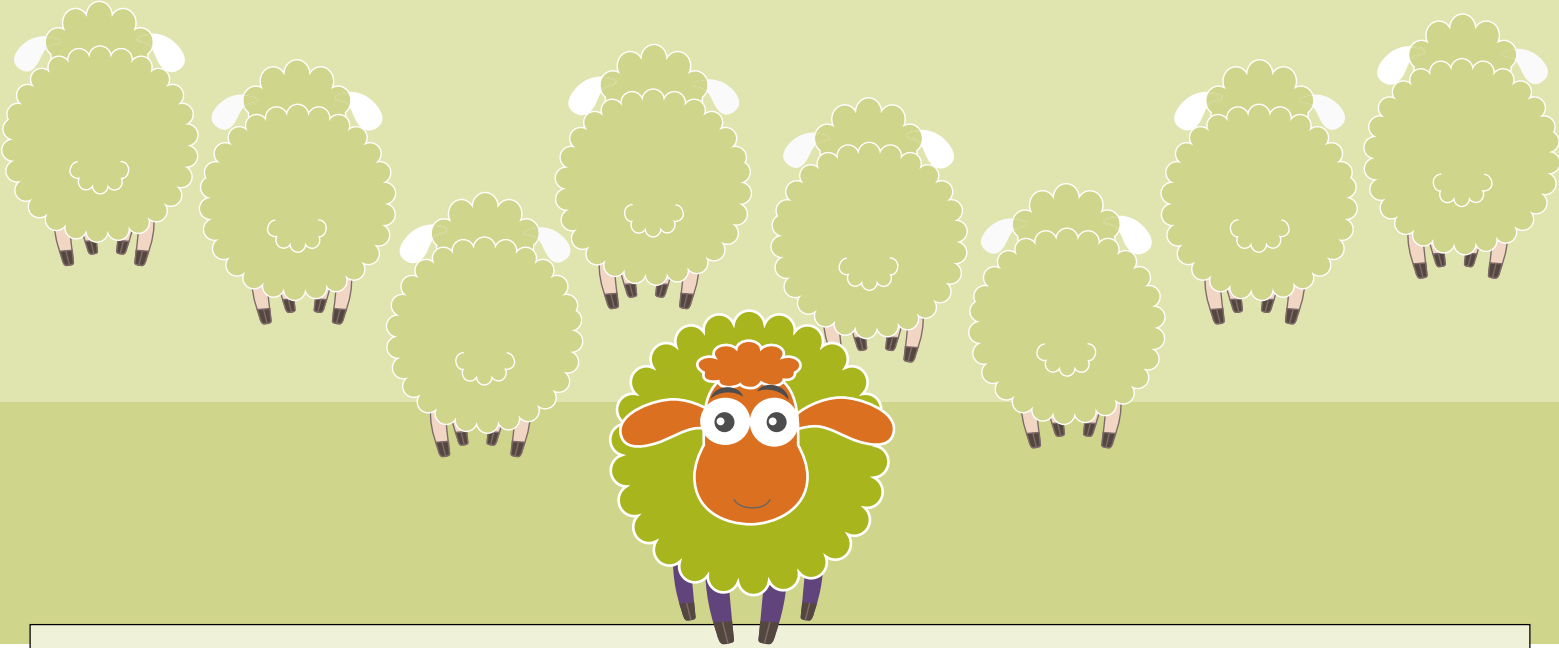
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