

4 ways to help build strong bones



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Today's issue of PD

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

- Dispense Assist
- Nova Pharmaceuticals

24/7 assistance

DISPENSE Assist is highlighting how it can help pharmacy owners deal with staffing and cost challenges with its fully qualified technicians available 24/7.

For more information, see page three.

New medication

NOVA Pharmaceuticals emergency contraception Novella-1 will be available soon for dispensing by pharmacists to appropriately counselled customers.

Learn more about the medication on the back page.

267k vaccinated but more can be done

OVER a quarter of a million people have been vaccinated against influenza this year through community pharmacies in Queensland, reported the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Queensland branch President Chris Owen (pictured) said, "as of 12 May, more than 267,000 Queenslanders have opted for flu vaccinations at their local pharmacy, marking a 27% surge from 2023's figures".

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, Owen added, "it's a great result but we can do more".

He explained pharmacists need to be more proactive as "we all do a poor job in marketing these health services to our patients".

"Certainly vaccinations are a great public health initiative, and as patients are coming into our pharmacies for the winter season, we should be proactively asking them to consider these things for their health.

"I think we, as an industry, do



these things quite poorly.

"We have people walking in through our doors and we just allow them to walk out without even asking them [about vaccinations] at all - this really needs to improve."

Owen said the peak flu season "runs through to end Jun, and even Jul, so we need to do the best thing for our patients and make sure we are regularly asking our patients about taking their vaccinations".

"Just being reactive is a thing of the past," he commented.

Owen reminded colleagues about the expanded access to Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine for patients through participating community pharmacies.

"Eligible patients also now have

access to RSV vaccinations through their participating community pharmacy," said Owen.

These are adults aged 75 years and older, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 60 to 74 years, and adults aged 60 to 74 years with medical conditions that increase their risk of severe disease due to RSV.

He highlighted concerns over RSV cases which have surpassed flu cases this year, revealing that the state has recorded 15,020 RSV cases and 12,065 flu incidents so far.

With the vast majority of Queenslanders living within close proximity to a pharmacy, Owen underscored the convenience and accessibility of pharmacy-based vaccination services.

"Ninety-seven percent of people who live in urban areas live within 2.5km of their nearest community pharmacy, and 83% of regional Australians do so within 5km of a pharmacy, providing easy access to healthcare," Owen concluded. JG



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Dispensary Corner

IN AN era where everyone is glued to their screens, it turns out that smartphones might just be the new superheroes in the battle against prediabetes.

With the global rates of this condition on the rise, researchers are now turning to digital means to prevent the slide to type 2 diabetes.

The researchers behind the study, published in *Plus One*, are not new to the digital game; after all, there's an app for everything these days.

They scoured through four databases - Medline, Embase, PsycInfo, and Scopus - and pulled out 29 studies that dared to tackle prediabetes with digital swagger.

These included everything from text messages that nudge you to ditch that donut, to mobile apps that probably send virtual side-eyes if you skip the gym, and even web-based platforms where you can share your glucose levels without sharing your identity.

Turns out, nine of these were the crème de la crème of research methods - randomised controlled trials.

Those nine boasted about improvements in blood sugar levels, weight loss, and how many steps participants took (hopefully away from the fridge).

However, about one-third of the studies admitted that their flashy initial results didn't stick around as long as the extra pounds sometimes do.

The verdict? Health apps are a swipe away, but figuring out which ones are effective is the next big step.

CW slams \$1 discount

CHEMIST Warehouse (CW) has slammed the freezing of maximum medicine co-payments, via the staged application of the discretionary \$1 discount.

The measure was introduced in tue's Federal Budget, as part of the eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA) (*PD 15 May*).

A CW spokesperson told *Pharmacy Daily*, "the gradual removal of the current allowable \$1 discount is a backward and anti-competitive step".

"It will mean patients who currently shop at pharmacies that pass on the maximum permissible discount will face a Government-imposed price rise.

"The ability of pharmacies to voluntarily charge their patients cheaper prices for their essential PBS-subsidised medicines will be removed," he said.

However, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's National President Trent Twomey (**pictured**) said the \$1 discount is being phased in and will bring "universality" to PBS medicines for pharmacies.

"The freezing of maximum medicine co-payments via the staged application of the discretionary \$1 discount will help Australians struggling with the



cost of healthcare and will restore universality to the PBS."

"On behalf of our members, the Pharmacy Guild has a strong track record of fighting to bring down the cost of medicines.

"I'm pleased the Guild secured anti-inflationary relief for patients by phasing in the universal application of the \$1 discount as part of our 8CPA negotiations."

Twomey added that the freezing indexation of co-payment means patients won't have to foot more of the overall cost for their medicines come 01 Jan each year. *JG*

Large data attack

MEDISECURE, an electronic prescriptions company, was the target of a large-scale ransomware attack yesterday, with still an unknown number of people affected by the data breach (*PD breaking news*).

The cyber attack has compromised personal and health information, prompting the company to shut down its website and issue a statement that it has taken "urgent steps to mitigate the impact", attributing the origin of the breach to a third-party vendor.

The National Cyber Security Coordinator Lt Gen Michelle McGuinness has revealed that initial investigations have suggested that MediSecure's ransomware attack is an isolated incident.

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New retail venture

ECS Botanics has commenced direct-to-consumer medicinal cannabis sales following an agreement with Elite Medical Solutions to retail ECS medicinal cannabis soft gel capsules and oral liquids, under the 'RAP' brand.

Elite Medical Solutions will sell a minimum annual order quantity of \$380,000, based on existing demand trends.

EDITORIAL

Editor - Jayamala Gupte

Deputy Editor - Matt Lennon

Journalists - Adam Bishop, Myles

Stedman, Janie Medbury, Matthew Wai

Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper

Publisher - Damian Francis

Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan

Advertising - Dante Muranty

advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

Head of Operations &

Contributing Editor - Anna Piper

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

info@pharmacydaily.com.au

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