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Today's issue of PD

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

- TerryWhite Chemmart
- Guild Insurance

Grow with TWC

TERRYWHITE Chemmart's (TWC) commitment to business excellence and health expertise can help drive profitability - see **page three**.

Insures scope

FOR over 60 years, Guild Insurance has protected members' real-life needs, and will continue to support them as scope of practice pilots increase - see the **back page**.

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WA, Qld and NSW expand their scope

PHARMACISTS in Western Australia will be able to resupply oral contraceptives as part of a new pilot program, as Queensland clocks up over 10,000 visits by women seeking in-pharmacy treatments for uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTI).

The announcements come just as new data emerging out of NSW shows that an overwhelming majority of patients want pharmacists and paramedics to deliver a wider range of everyday healthcare services.

The WA Pharmacist Resupply of Oral Contraceptive Pills Pilot enables pharmacists to supply up to 12 months of a combination or progestogen-only contraceptive pill to women between 18 and 39 years of age, who have a proven stable history of using the pill for two years.

Patients aged between 16 and 17 years can access up to four months' supply as an extension to their original prescription.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia WA branch President, Kristian Ray, said, "WA has now joined the majority of Australian states and territories giving women greater autonomy and

choice when it comes to accessing oral contraceptives".

Ray added compulsory training is now available, and encouraged those interested in becoming pharmacist prescribers to take up the opportunity.

Amanda Seeto, Vice President of Queensland's Pharmacy Guild of Australia also noted the growing trend of increasing reliance on local pharmacies for UTI services across her state.

"In just over one year, there have been 10,148 occasions of service across Queensland," said Seeto.

"This represents thousands of Queensland women who have been able to access UTI treatment in their local community pharmacy rather than waiting for GP appointments or hospital presentations," she added.

"Prompt treatment is crucial, as delayed care can lead to more serious conditions."

Currently, nearly 800 community pharmacies across Queensland offer UTI services, making this treatment highly accessible.

Additionally, two other statewide pilots are underway in the state, one for pharmacists to treat 17 everyday conditions and five

chronic ones, and the second pilot for prescribing hormonal birth control to women aged 16 years and older, set to start in Jul.

Further, new research conducted by Insightfully for the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's NSW branch, revealed that 91% of patients support the full scope of practice reforms for pharmacists, and 94% for paramedics.

The Guild is urging the NSW government to mirror Queensland's reforms, where pharmacists can treat conditions like asthma and nausea, thus freeing up GPs and hospitals for more complex cases.

David Heffernan, President of the NSW Guild branch, emphasised the success of these changes, noting that over 15,000 treatments have been delivered in the UTI trial. JG

APC appointments

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has announced a change in leadership, with A/Prof Sue Kirsas stepping down as Chair after six years.

Deputy Chair Prof Sarah Roberts-Thomson will take over, while Kirsas will remain as a Director.

Kirsas expressed pride in the organisation's achievements, saying APC saw significant growth and innovation, especially during the challenges of the COVID years.

Incoming Chair Roberts-Thomson praised Kirsas' legacy and expressed her commitment to maintaining the body's excellence in pharmacy education.

Prof Kirstie Galbraith joins as Deputy Chair.

Mpox spreading

WITH Mpox spreading globally due to international travel, Victoria has confirmed it has 16 cases of the disease, with 13 locally acquired as of Apr this year.

People with symptoms should seek immediate medical care and testing, especially if they present with genital rash or lesions.

Free Mpox vaccines are available for eligible individuals at pharmacies, and other healthcare places.

Two doses are required for optimal protection, so pharmacy customers should be reminded to get their second dose if they haven't yet.

Any suspected or confirmed Mpox cases must be reported to the Department of Health.

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Dispensary Corner

EVER had a karaoke performance so bad you wanted to forget it?

Well, rapid eye movement (REM) sleep might be your secret weapon for handling that stress.

Scientists at the University of Helsinki's SleepWell Research Program, led by Anu-Katriina Pesonen, decided to explore how our different sleep stages - slow wave sleep (SWS) and REM sleep - affect our stress levels, and will inform treatment options for anxiety disorders.

And what better way to stress people out than karaoke?

In this study, 29 brave souls were split into two groups: one had their SWS disrupted, and the other had their REM sleep messed with.

The stress test? Singing karaoke without hearing themselves and then, for the ultimate cringe, listening to their recordings without any background music.

Yep, pure vocal embarrassment. The researchers measured their stress responses before and after these torturous nights.

The result was that those who missed out on SWS but still got their REM sleep had stronger stress responses the next morning compared to those deprived of REM sleep.

So, while REM sleep might make that karaoke nightmare seem worse, it's also helping your brain process the emotional trauma of croaking out a song.

Next time you bomb at karaoke, remember: sleep tight and let REM do its thing.

Your brain, and your future karaoke attempts, will thank you.

Overseas-trained pharmacists in limbo

EXCLUSIVE

THE 60-Day Dispensing (60DD) policy has served to pull the rug out from foreign-trained pharmacists seeking visas, with business owners too worried about their bottom line to take any risks with sponsorship, according to South Australian pharmacy owner Irfan Hashmi.

The situation hasn't been helped by more offshore Knowledge Assessment of Pharmaceutical Sciences (KAPS) centres opening last year, significantly raising the number of overseas-trained pharmacists who have passed their exams, Hashmi told *Pharmacy Daily*.

The bottleneck doesn't look like it will be resolved soon, with the Australian Government slowing the issuance of invitations for visa application, possibly based

on recommendations from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's latest *Workforce Capability* report, he suggested.

Hashmi is highly experienced as a mentor to overseas pharmacists as they navigate qualifying exams and visa hurdles to obtain their right to work in Australia.

"Business owners are afraid of the impact of 60DD on their revenues, and they really don't want to wait up to two years to hire a pharmacist," Hashmi added.

"Further, my understanding from the state ministers I met was that the Federal Government is acting on advice from the Guild's workforce report and has slowed further work visas for pharmacists.

"The whole situation is in limbo as KAPS centres, just in Pakistan and India, increased from one to two to

eight in each country, with around 1,000 pharmacists who have passed their exams awaiting visas."

Pharmacist Muhammad Tayyab Khan, who has passed his KAPS, APHRA and English proficiency requirements, and completed at least 50 additional Australian courses, is one of many awaiting an invitation to apply for a visa.

"I am happy to take on all the costs and hassles of the visa process to work only in rural areas as I know I can make a positive difference to lives of my patients."

The Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) said it is not a decision maker in visa approvals, job placements or migration policy.

However, APC added it is working across the sector with colleagues to further improve the international pharmacists' journey. *JG*

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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For over 60 years, Guild Insurance has supported Australia's pharmacy profession through everything you do. Together with the PGA and PDL, we've worked hard to ensure our policies protect and reflect pharmacists' real-life needs.

Now that the PGA-driven scope of practice changes are live, we understand that, yet again, the real-life needs of pharmacists have changed, but our support hasn't. All Guild customers who participate in an approved scope of practice pilot can do so with confidence, knowing their insurance policy will still protect them.

What's a scope of practice pilot?

Scope of practice pilots will continue to evolve as state and federal governments and their agencies continue to work with our profession. In Queensland right now, community pharmacists who have undertaken 12 months of additional training can offer additional services to patients for a number of conditions, including school sores, shingles, mild psoriasis, wound management, swimmer's ear, weight loss management and hypertension, among others. It is these types of programs that Guild has committed to support through the addition of an additional benefit.

An additional benefit for Guild customers.

To provide cover certainty, the policy wording we apply to all Guild Pharmacy Business policies includes an additional benefit for 'Scope of Practice Pilots'. If you're already insured with Guild, this benefit is automatically applied. If you are not with Guild, you should ask your insurer if they can say the same.

If you'd like to find out more about Guild's exclusive support of pharmacy's scope of practice pilots, visit guildinsurance.com.au/pilot or if you'd like to be protected by a policy that is tailor made for Australian pharmacists, call a Guild insurance specialist on **1800 810 213**.

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