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## Today's issue of PD

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

- Dispense Assist
- Glucojel

## Get assisted now

FOR rates as low as \$6.37 per hour, pharmacy owners can take advantage of Dispense Assist to dispense prescriptions for a fraction of their normal cost, as well as perform any other task required, at a moment's notice.

See **page three** to find out how to sign up for a free trial.

## Reasons to smile

GLUCOJEL is giving pharmacy owners - and their customers - 10,000 reasons to smile with its latest offer.

Customers who purchase the delicious jelly beans may find themselves \$10,000 richer.

Curious? See the **back page**.

## Devices at risk

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is warning consumers and healthcare providers that essential medical devices may be impacted by the upcoming 3G network shutdown.

From 28 Oct, Telstra and Optus will switch off their third-generation networks, which could affect older devices, including personal medical alarms and pacemakers, that rely exclusively on 3G for data transmission or to make calls.

The TGA has advised consumers and healthcare professionals to confirm whether a device relies on 3G services, and if necessary, to seek a replacement or upgrade.

Newer devices that use wi-fi, 4G, 5G, or Bluetooth for calls and data transmission are not expected to be impacted.

# Pharmacy Guild adds fuel to CW fire

**OPPOSITION** calls to reject the proposed merger of Chemist Warehouse and Sigma Healthcare are growing louder, with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia further expressing its disapproval.

In a submission to the ACCC's competition review and reported by the *Australian Financial Review*, The Pharmacy Guild has labelled efforts by Chemist Warehouse to lessen the impact as "tokenistic".

Arguments put forward by the Guild say that the deal should not proceed as the combined group would control more than half of revenue in the pharmacy sector.

Other issues raised by the Guild include a pledge by Sigma to continue as a wholesaler and offer the full range of PBS medicines to the sector, including competitors.

"It is not a change but a continuation of the status quo which is in Sigma's interest," the Guild's ACCC submission reads.

The Guild's concerns follow similar criticisms levelled last week by John Cullity, the CEO of TerryWhite Chemmart's parent company, EBOS Group (*PD* 17 Oct), who said the deal may negatively impact smaller businesses and would reduce choice in the market for consumers.



Earlier this year, the ACCC flagged competition concerns surrounding the deal, citing a reduction in pharmacy choice for customers that "may lead to increased prices for the goods and services provided in pharmacies".

Sigma Healthcare reacted by sweetening the deal, offering members of its Amcal, Discount Drug Store and Guardian brands the option of easily withdrawing from the group if the Chemist Warehouse merger is approved.

Sigma has also said it would keep separate customer records, which would not be shared with the Chemist Warehouse brand.

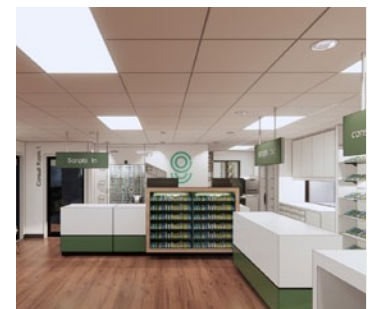
According to the *AFR*, Sigma's offer to allow pharmacies to leave the group signalled internal ructions within the membership.

Citing "inherent conflict of interest", the Guild believes the merger company would

be incentivised to provide "preferential treatment to Chemist Warehouse pharmacies".

"The proposal does not address whether the two alternative major full-line wholesalers, or the smaller wholesalers, have the ability or capacity to service Sigma's current franchisees and wholesaling customers," the submission stated.

After being delayed twice, a final decision by the ACCC is expected by next month. *ML*



## Pharmacy Council seeks out speakers

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has announced an expression of interest for submissions to speak at its annual interprofessional colloquium event next year.

Themed 'Breaking Boundaries: Education as an Enabler of Trust in Healthcare', the conference will take place at Rydges Hotel, Melbourne on 13 May 2025, focusing on the critical role education plays in building trust in healthcare.

APC is inviting educators from across the healthcare spectrum to submit presentations showcasing effective examples of interprofessional education (IPE), with a special focus on trust in healthcare.

Teams of at least two educators

from different professions are encouraged to apply, so that they can be part of an important discussion "on how trust-building efforts within IPE can reshape the future of healthcare delivery".

Presenters will receive sponsored event registration, as well as round-trip travel within Australia, and accommodation for one night.

To submit an EOI, applicants must provide an abstract (max. 300 words) detailing the IPE activity, its impact, and key learnings, and a one-minute video featuring the presenters providing an elevator pitch of their proposed presentation.

Submissions open on 05 Nov 2024 and close on 02 Feb 2025 - find out more **HERE**.

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## Dispensary Corner

**MEDICAL** students in the UK were left stunned after discovering a "remarkable anatomical variation" while examining a body that had been donated to the University of Birmingham Medical School.

As it turns out, a British man had lived to the ripe old age of 78 without ever realising he had three penises - a condition called 'triphallia', which the medics described as "a rare congenital anomaly describing the presence of three distinct penile shafts".

It is understandable that the man never realised he was a medical phenomenon, as his genitals appeared normal from the outside, while the additional two small penises were "stacked" inside his scrotum.

While the researchers hailed the finding as a "serendipitous discovery" in the *Journal of Medical Case Reports*, they noted the man likely experienced a slew of problems, ranging from urinary tract infections, to erectile dysfunction and fertility issues.

Being born with two penises is rare enough, researchers pointed out, but the presence of three has only ever been reported once before.

However, it is believed that polyphallia (having more than one penis) could be more common than we realise, given that concealed internal penises may not present themselves.

If they form externally, the extra appendages - which are typically non-functional and smaller - are often removed.

## EBOS' strong start to FY25



**EBOS** Group, the parent company of several pharmacy brands including TerryWhite Chemmart and Symbion, has reported a positive start to FY25, with underlying EBITDA growth of 7.4% for the three months to 30 Sep 2024 compared to the prior corresponding period.

The results, which were adjusted to exclude earnings from the now-lapsed Chemist Warehouse contract (*PD* 07 Jun), were revealed during the Australian healthcare company's annual general meeting (AGM) in Auckland yesterday.

The Group, which posted strong earnings growth for FY24 earlier this year (*PD* 21 Aug), reiterated its guidance for the current financial year, expecting to generate underlying EBITDA of between \$575-\$600 million.

Despite losing its \$1.9 billion Chemist Warehouse supply contract, EBOS is still expecting to see continued organic growth, and is targeting \$300 million in new pharmacy revenues, "in light of changed industry dynamics".

During the AGM, EBOS CEO, John Cullity (**pictured**), also acknowledged that approximately 12 months had passed since the Australian Government's 60-day dispensing policy came into effect.

He shared, "the impact to our community pharmacy business was broadly offset in FY24 by the government providing a corresponding increase to the Community Service Obligation or CSO funding pool".

The current CSO deed that EBOS is operating under was recently extended while the company finalises discussions with the Government on the first Pharmacy Wholesaler Agreement.

"We remain confident that the upcoming agreement will fully reflect the value our Symbion wholesale business provides in supplying essential medicines to the Australian community," Cullity said.

The meeting also saw a number of Board shuffles announced, including the election of former CEO of LifeHealthcare, Matt Muscio, as Director, effective from 01 Jan 2025.

Meanwhile, Tracey Batten and Elizabeth Coutts were re-elected to the Board, and following the meeting, Peter Williams retired from his role as Independent Director after more than a decade.

EBOS revealed it is also finalising the appointment of an additional non-executive Australian director in the near-term, as part of the overall board renewal process. *JM*

## PD Editor wanted

**WE ARE** on the hunt for a new *Pharmacy Daily* editor.

The ideal candidate will be keen to cover the latest pharmacy news in Australia and deliver it in an informative, accurate and timely fashion - someone who can take the title to even greater heights and become a leading journalist in this space.

It is an ideal role for a B2B specialist who has experience editing a title or a deputy editor or similar looking to take a step up in their career.

The successful candidate will be able to sniff out a good news story, have the curiosity and self-motivation to follow up the main issues within the industry and break down complex issues.

He or she will be comfortable representing *Pharmacy Daily* at events, interviewing big-name industry executives and hunting down fresh and original news stories.

Eligible candidates must be able to live and work in Sydney - find out more **HERE**.

## Asthma concerns

**ASTHMA-RELATED** deaths have returned to pre-COVID levels, according to new ABS data released by the National Asthma Council Australia.

The figures show that there were 474 asthma-related deaths recorded in Australia in 2023 - almost on par with the 473 asthma deaths recorded in 2022.

The numbers follow a drop in deaths in 2021, coinciding with the lockdowns.

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OVER-WORKED?  
WAGES INCREASING?**



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