



Today's issue of PD

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

- Chemsave
- MediChoice
- Astroglide

Consider savings

WHETHER it is catalogue pre-order rebates, dispensary assistance subscriptions or bonus stock, aligning with Chemsave delivers bottom-line benefits for your pharmacy. Learn more on [page four](#).

The right choice

NOVA Pharmaceuticals' MediChoice range of analgesics and cough and cold remedies are a cost-effective solution for winter ills.

For a special winter deal, see [page five](#).

Flu season already off and running

CSL Seqirus has announced it has released over seven million influenza vaccine doses to help prepare for a "potentially challenging" flu season ([PD 27 Mar](#)).

So far this year, there have already been over 46,300 lab-confirmed cases recorded in the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System.

This is the most ever recorded for this time of year and more than 50% higher than the previous record of approximately 30,000 cases documented from Jan to Mar last year.

Modelling suggests the true burden of flu may be even higher than reported.

Peter Guthrey, Senior Pharmacist with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), said the availability of flu vaccines is welcome news, especially with the late-season peak in cases recently seen in the Northern Hemisphere.

"Lots of people in the US and UK have been sick with flu and this



has continued late into their flu season," he said.

"Influenza can spread around the world rapidly through international travel, so Australians need to be ready for the potential of a big flu season here."

PSA National President A/Prof Fei Sim said now is the time for Australians to roll up their sleeves.

"The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is by getting vaccinated before the peak of the flu season," A/Prof Sim said.

"We have seen time and again the serious consequences of underestimating the flu, particularly for vulnerable Australians including

older adults, young children, pregnant women and those with chronic health conditions."

The flu vaccine is recommended for all Australians over six months of age.

Higher risk groups have access to free flu vaccinations, including children under five, adults over 65, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pregnant women and immunocompromised individuals.

Queensland and Western Australia offer state-funded influenza vaccinations for all residents. *KB*

Astroglide is here

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Qld scope training subsidy extended

THE Queensland Govt has announced it will extend a subsidy of up to \$7,000 to support pharmacists to undertake the necessary training to participate in the Community Pharmacy Scope of Practice pilot.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland Acting President Cate Whalan said the original \$6 million training subsidy was due to expire on 31 Mar, but the extension now means Queensland patients will have access to more services across the state.

“This extension will no doubt encourage more community pharmacists to undertake the training and in turn provide more health service options,” she said, adding that more options will also help alleviate the strain on hospital emergency departments.

Top pharmacists recognised

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) South Australia and Northern Territory branch presented its 2025 Pharmacist Awards on the weekend, highlighting outstanding achievements across a range of categories.

Jaimee Anderson, who specialises in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with youth onset and pregnancy-related type 2 diabetes as well as gestational diabetes, was awarded SA/NT Pharmacist of the Year.

Simone Rossi, the primary architect of the Australian Medicines Handbook (AMH), was awarded the SA/NT Lifetime Achievement Award for providing evidence-based medicines info.

Maria Cooper, SA/NT Early Career Pharmacist of the Year, published articles on workplace stress during the pandemic, leading to the development of the world’s first Early Career Pharmacist-dedicated peer support program.

Jessie Wattie, the SA/NT Intern



Pharmacist of the Year, has among other things, contributed to medication reviews and deprescribing at three aged care facilities with onsite pharmacists.

Imogen Bates was awarded the gold medal, which is given to students periodically after completing a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree with the highest grade point average above 6.25.

Presenting the awards in Adelaide, PSA SA/NT President Dr Manya Angley said the recipients “exemplify the dedication, innovation, and leadership that drive pharmacy forward”. *KB*

“Unprecedented” guideline update

THERAPEUTIC Guidelines has expanded its antibiotic guidelines following a comprehensive review of more than 200 existing or new clinical topics.

The scale of the update is unprecedented, involving over 100 clinical experts and covering more than 1,400 drug recommendations.

New patient information, images and diagrams have also been added.

The updated antibiotic guidelines will be released in stages during 2025 and 2026.

The first release covers content updates on infections commonly managed in primary care, such as UTIs and eye infections, as well as information on serious infections usually managed in hospitals, such as pneumonia and sepsis - read it [HERE](#).

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Dispensary Corner

CRYSTAL visions or rocks in your head?

A health and wellness hotel in Colorado is offering guests the services of a crystal concierge, who can provide guests with the right healing stones to promote whatever sense of wellbeing they're after.

The Mining Exchange Hotel, founded in 1902, was originally a home base and business hub for mining magnates.

Now, in collaboration with wellness boutique Aurathentic, it provides crystal selection and delivery so guests can access the power of pebbles for the duration of their stay.

The program offers a six-pack of stones for optimism, stress release, strength, vitality, love, calming, wellness, cleansing, happiness - basically anything you can think of, there's a rock for it.

The hotel also sells crystals for when you're on the go.

Shungite reputedly offsets exposure to man-made electromagnetic fields or EMF, which apparently is particularly intense in air travel - although there is some debate about whether EMF is actually bad, and, for that matter, whether the stones actually work.

There's also selenite to ward off negative energy of other travellers, hematite to ease anxiety and amethyst to heal and comfort (how's that luggage allowance looking?).

To complete the package, the hotel also offers guests non-invasive aura cleansing.

Rooms start at US\$130 a night.

Quit-smoking drugs likely safe in pregnancy

QUIT-SMOKING medicines such as nicotine patches and varenicline do not increase the risk of major birth defects in babies, according to new research from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), UNSW Sydney.

The research data found no evidence that infants exposed to these medicines have higher rates of major congenital malformations.

"Considering the devastating consequences of smoking on both mother and baby, our results should reassure pregnant women who need help quitting smoking," said Dr Duong Tran, an NDARC Research Fellow and first author.

"These findings are also helpful for healthcare providers when discussing the benefits and risks of smoking cessation therapies with patients, and better support women to make informed choices about quitting during pregnancy."

There are currently three quit-smoking medicines available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme - nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), varenicline and bupropion - that

are known to be safe and effective in the general population.

However, the lack of clear evidence for their safety in pregnancy means that many clinical guidelines for pregnancy have recommended caution when using NRT and advised against varenicline and bupropion.

The large multinational study compared 13,000 newborns - of whom 9,300 were exposed to NRT, 3,000 to varenicline, and 1,000 to bupropion - and their risk of birth defects with babies born to women who smoked in early pregnancy but did not use these therapies.

Overall, they found no evidence of an increased risk of major birth defects of any type among babies born to women who used these medicines compared with those who smoked in early pregnancy but did not use them.

"Our study is the largest of its kind to date and provides high-quality evidence on the safety of quit-smoking medications in pregnancy, thanks to the international collaboration and innovative analysis of routinely collected



data," Dr Tran said.

"Pregnant women are typically excluded from clinical trials due to medico-legal, ethical and other reasons; hence, observational studies like ours are essential to filling in the knowledge gaps and for guiding healthcare decisions."

The authors pointed out there is not enough data on bupropion to make a definitive finding.

They also cautioned that the study timeframe does not discount the risk of long-term functional concerns such as neurodevelopmental disorders.

Read the full paper **HERE**. KB

QUM Alliance welcomes education and literacy grants

THE Quality Use of Medicines Alliance (QUM Alliance) has welcomed new Australian Government health education and literacy grants as a "game changer" in helping address some of Australia's most prevalent and pressing health issues.

Over the next three years, the QUM Alliance will implement programs to reduce stroke recurrence, prevent secondary fractures in osteoporosis, increase evidence-based care in menopause, ensure safe use of

antidepressants in young people, and improve outcomes for older people managing multiple chronic conditions.

Formed in 2023, the QUM Alliance is a collaborative network of peak consumer, health professional and research organisations, including the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA).

The health professional education grant, led by Medcast, will provide high quality evidence-based education and resources

through a range of face-to-face and technology-enabled solutions, building on the Alliance's previous work in eczema, gout, antidepressants in older adults and anticoagulants.

The consumer health literacy grant, led by the Health Care Consumers' Association, will co-design educational resources to address some of the significant medication-related challenges faced by Australians, ensuring the programs meet the needs and perspectives of consumers.

Do The Math(s)!

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