

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today comprises three pages of news, including a special feature from **Independent Pharmacies Australia**, and a full page from **MediChoice**.

Enhance agility

INDEPENDENT Pharmacies Australia (IPA) is committed to facilitating innovative future-ready opportunities for the 1,100 pharmacies within its network, including those in the Chemist Discount Centre (CDC) banner group.

Learn more about how IPA helps pharmacies achieve quality healthcare outcomes for their local communities in the special feature on **p2**.

Free health checks to help head off T2D

AUSTRALIANS are being urged to get simple health checks this National Diabetes Week (13-19 Jul) in an effort to prevent type 2 diabetes with early detection.

Priceline Pharmacy is offering free health checks on its digital health stations, giving people a quick and easy way to check their type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular and metabolic health risks.

The checks are self-service and take as little as five minutes to complete, and results are instant.

Diabetes Australia Group CEO Justine Cain said the initiative has the potential to save thousands of lives and ease growing pressure on the health system.

"There are 1.3 million Australians living with type 2 diabetes and another 500,000 living with silent, undiagnosed type 2 diabetes," Cain said.

"Worryingly, there are another 2 million people who are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

"A simple, free check could be the difference between early detection and a life-threatening diabetes complication like a heart attack or stroke."

While genetics and family history play a role in diabetes, more than

half of type 2 diabetes cases can be prevented or delayed through lifestyle changes, Cain explained, noting that a health check is a practical way to help Australians understand their risk and improve their health.

New analysis by Diabetes Australia indicates that type 2 diabetes is one of the biggest health challenges facing the nation, with someone diagnosed every eight minutes.

"This National Diabetes Week we want to highlight the importance of prevention and early diagnosis of type 2 diabetes and the prevention of complications from all types of diabetes," Cain said.

"These are critically important to protect the health of Australians now and into the future."

In addition to blood glucose tests, the Priceline health stations can also identify cardiovascular risks early, such as high blood pressure and cholesterol.

The Royal Australian College of GPs is also urging people to get tested in order to save lives by preventing diabetes, pointing out it is much better to prevent it than treat it.

"This year for National Diabetes Week we are trying to encourage earlier diagnosis as well as preventing diabetes with a focus on lifestyle intervention," said RACGP President Dr Michael Wright.

Cain noted that Australia is



lagging behind other countries when it comes to type 2 diabetes prevention and is calling on governments to invest in a strong, coordinated public health response.

"Free checks are an important first step, but they must be part of a bigger, long-term strategy to tackle this national type 2 diabetes epidemic," she concluded. **KB**

Offering choice

NOVA Pharmaceuticals' MediChoice offers rapid release paracetamol in packs of 16 or 32.

Turn to **page four** to learn more about winter deals.



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IN MAY 2024, John Nguyen, owner of Chemist Discount Centre (CDC) Canning Vale, made the strategic decision to join the CDC banner group, part of the [Independent Pharmacies Australia](#) network - a decision made with the intention to safeguard and expand his family-owned and run business of eight years.

Independent Pharmacies Australia's CDC offering is an end-to-end discount pharmacy franchise solution built by pharmacists, for pharmacists.

Since joining the CDC franchise network, John and his team of ten staff have been able to significantly enhance their front of shop offering - gaining access to a broader range of healthcare products and services, previously challenging to source independently.

"In the past, we found it

extremely difficult to focus on stock management," Nguyen said.

"We now have access to the Buy IT Right inventory management system through our CDC membership, which has automated our ordering process and allowed us to maximise buying discounts while minimising out of stocks.

"With the evolving pressures of the healthcare system, we decided to align with the CDC banner group to become more

agile as a business, while at the same time maintaining a patient-centred approach to care based on our experience as a family

business."

To learn more about the Chemist Discount Centre offering, visit joinchemistdiscountcentre.com.au.



IPA supports CDC Canning Vale to enhance agility with patient-centred care

Vaccinations a key offering

PHARMACIES are seeing an increasing number of patients seeking vaccinations, and it has become a key offering for CDC Canning Vale.

The pharmacy has now been able to widen its scope of practice, delivering an increasing number of vaccinations in-store, such as whooping cough and shingles.

"This is a great offering for our patients, as bookings and vaccinations are now a seamless process," said John Nguyen from CDC Canning Vale.

"Through CDC's parent company IPA, we have access to staff training and consistent stock availability to reliably deliver these health services to our community," he added.

A word from Steven Kastrinakis, IPA Managing Director

Independent Pharmacies Australia is proud of their ongoing commitment to facilitating innovative, future-ready opportunities for the 1,100 pharmacies within the network – helping them to achieve quality healthcare outcomes for their local communities.

"Through the IPA network, Chemist Discount Centre pharmacies like CDC Canning Vale have access to market-leading trading terms, exciting marketing campaigns, merchandise support, expert professional service leadership and hassle-free technology,

including ecommerce," IPA Managing Director, Steven Kastrinakis, said.



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Dispensary Corner

A MAN who literally had dreams of reaching new heights recently shared his experiences of leg lengthening surgery on TikTok.

Leon Otremba, a 23-year-old man from Germany, has taken to social media to share his journey of becoming 20 centimetres taller.

Otremba, who claims he is now the world record holder in leg lengthening, underwent two surgeries two years apart to reach a height of 195cm - he originally stood at 171.5cm.

The expensive cosmetic procedure involves breaking the legs, implanting magnetic rods, and slowly stretching them out over several months.

Otremba said the decision was "life changing" and "completely worth it", telling TikTok viewers that his height had been making him depressed because he felt "too short".

Each surgery required at least four to five months of recovery before Otremba could return to daily activities, leaving him in a wheelchair initially before moving to crutches.

The worst thing about recovery, Otremba said, was his inability to sleep properly.

Now, other men have expressed interest in getting the controversial surgery, with thousands discussing the topic on Reddit threads.

While no official data is kept on how many leg-lengthening procedures are carried out around the world, some plastic surgeons have estimated it has doubled in recent years.

Peak body raises alarm over fake AI health info

THE Australian Medical Association (AMA) has raised concerns about the use of artificial intelligence technology to mislead the public into purchasing unproven and potentially harmful treatments for serious illnesses, including diabetes.

It comes after AI videos mimicking reputable health professionals, including Dr Norman Swan (pictured as fake), Prof Kerry Phelps and Prof Jonathan Shaw, promoted unproven products.

The AMA is calling on the Federal Government to crack down on this practice, and in a letter written to Communications Minister Anika Wells, urged the government to introduce clear and enforceable regulations on health-related advertising online.

"We are now living in an age where any video that appears online has to be questioned - is it real, or is it a deepfake?" AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen explained.

"Deepfake videos are becoming more and more convincing, and this technology is being exploited by dodgy companies peddling snake oil to vulnerable people who are dealing with serious health issues."

In Professor Shaw's case, the deepfake video was advertising an unproven dietary supplement as a treatment for type 2 diabetes.

A fake version of Dr Swan was used to sell supplements purporting to treat heart disease, diabetes or obesity.

"These videos encourage consumers to abandon clinically validated therapies in favour of unscientific alternatives," Dr McMullen said.

Many health professionals only become aware they have been impersonated when patients raise

questions about discontinuing their prescribed treatments or request information about where to purchase so-called 'miracle cures', said Dr McMullen.

MEANWHILE, international researchers, including from the University of South Australia and Flinders University, have demonstrated just how easy it is to exploit AI systems.

The team evaluated the five foundational and most advanced AI systems developed by OpenAI, Google, Anthropic, Meta and X Corp to determine whether they could be programmed to operate as health disinformation chatbots.

The 'chatbots' were then asked a series of health-related questions, with "disconcerting results", according to UniSA researcher, Dr Natansh Modi.

"In total, 88% of all responses were false, and yet they were presented with scientific terminology, a formal tone and fabricated references that made



the information appear legitimate," Dr Modi said.

"The disinformation included claims about vaccines causing autism, cancer-curing diets, HIV being airborne and 5G causing infertility," he explained.

The study is the first to show that leading AI systems can be converted into disinformation chatbots using developers' tools, as well as tools available to the public.

With millions of people turning to AI for guidance on health-related questions, the study reveals "a significant and previously under-explored risk in the health sector", Dr Modi said.

"This is not a future risk - it is already possible, and it is already happening," he added. KB

Gabapentin linked with dementia risk

RECEIVING six or more prescriptions of the drug gabapentin for low back pain is associated with significantly increased risks of developing dementia and mild cognitive impairment (MCI), US researchers have found.

With opioids increasingly off the table, gabapentin has become more popular for treating chronic pain.

However, concerns have emerged about its side effects, including a possible association with neurodegeneration, and the current study aimed to shed more light on these issues.

Reviewing the health records of

over 50,000 people, they found that those who had received six or more gabapentin prescriptions were 29% more likely to be diagnosed with dementia and 85% more likely to be diagnosed with MCI within 10 years of their initial pain diagnosis.

Concerningly, those aged 35-64 - normally considered too young to develop either condition - were more than twice as likely than those aged over 64.

Authors cautioned it was an observational study that cannot demonstrate cause and effect, but suggested close monitoring of people prescribed gabapentin for potential cognitive decline.

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