


“MedView Paperless enables our staff to spend more time with customers and provide a better level of service”

TONY SARENA - TerryWhite Chemmart Southland

APP2018 stand 127



Today's issue of PD
Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from Guardian.

Pharmacy collusion

TWO pharmacy owners in New Zealand have had formal civil proceedings lodged against them by the NZ Commerce Commission for alleged price-fixing.

The Commission has accused Prices Pharmacy 2011 Limited and its directors, Stuart Hebbard and Jason Wright, of facilitating a price-fixing agreement with competing pharmacies in the town of Nelson.

In most cases the agreement resulted in the dispensing charge consumers paid for fully funded prescription items increasing from NZ\$5 to NZ\$6 in May 2016.

The Commission has alleged the conduct arose from a Nelson region pharmacy owners meeting in Apr 2016 which was attended by ten pharmacy proprietors.

The conduct ceased in Jun 2016 when the pharmacies received additional taxpayer funding from the local District Health Board.

Warning letters have been issued to nine other pharmacy owners in the region, but the Commission has exercised its discretion to issue a warning rather than commence proceedings in those cases.

However in the case of Prices Pharmacy 2011 and its directors, the Commission is seeking a declaration that they contravened the New Zealand Commerce Act.

The agency is also seeking financial penalties and costs against the pharmacy owners.

Sigma connects pharmacy

SIGMA Healthcare has announced a new online platform, Sigma Connect, designed to improve the ordering and account interface with its pharmacy customers so that they have more time to provide healthcare services to their customers.



Details of the national roll-out of Sigma Connect to all its pharmacy brands and major customer groups are set to be announced at the 2018 Amcal/Guardian Retail Conference to be held this week on the Gold Coast.

Sigma said its goal is to help its pharmacy customers run better businesses, ultimately resulting in a healthier local community.

“We are excited to provide our pharmacy partners across Australia with a new one-stop, secure ordering and account management platform,” said Jeff Sells (pictured), executive gm, Retail Pharmacy.

“This will modernise the way pharmacies can order their stock to ensure that their customers are always well serviced,” he said.

Sigma Connect, which also allows a more secure and user friendly interface, available 24/7, offering self-serve reporting, real-time stock availability and personalised pricing, will replace the existing Netstore platform.

“The testing phase is complete and we are now rolling it out to our pharmacies across Australia.”

Following a successful trial of 22 pharmacies in Feb, Sigma Connect is now available in Amcal and Guardian stores.

Discount Drug Store, PharmaSave, and Chemist King pharmacies, major customer groups (including Pharmacy Alliance and Chemist Warehouse) and independent pharmacies will be able to access the new platform later in 2018 through a phased rollout plan with a focus on secure continuity of service, Sigma said.

Dispensing nurse ban

THE Health Care Complaints Commission prosecuted a complaint against Kevin Picones, a registered nurse, before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, for failing to provide appropriate nursing care and maintain professional boundaries, resulting in his deregistration for 12 months.

The failings included supply of Phenergan “on multiple occasions” to three of his vulnerable patients in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit at Orange Hospital in 2015.

He also was charged with providing cigarettes to patients within the unit and giving other inappropriate advice and access to his Facebook account.

See caselaw.nsw.gov.au for more.

New stroke hope

A MELBOURNE research trial has paved the way for improved outcomes for stroke patients.

Clot busting drug tenecteplase administered prior to clot retrieval meant some patients were able to avoid surgery and restore blood flow - ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

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Swisse highlights prevention



SWISSE Wellness has highlighted the massive potential for Australian companies in the preventative health and complementary medicines space, in light of a greater emphasis being placed on prevention in many countries across the globe.

On Fri the company hosted about 150 academics, clinicians, health professionals and industry leaders at the 2nd annual Swisse Wellness Symposium in Sydney, with speakers sharing research and insights across topics such as personalised nutrition, sustainable food systems, long-term health behaviour change and depression.

Swisse Wellness managing director Oliver Horn cited early data from a wide-ranging national study on the state of Australia's health to highlight "the enormity of the task, and the opportunity.

"Swisse's mission - to make billions around the world healthier and happier - is not a slogan, it is something we take very seriously, and from that research there appears to be much still to do".

Horn is pictured above centre with Dr Bruce Coghill, nutritionist and food security specialist (left) and Professor Charles Mackay, head of the centre for Immunology and Inflammation, Monash University.

They swiped your pen again?



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Bananaboat joins Pharmacy dot com

SUNCARE brand Bananaboat is the latest addition to the Pharmacy Click and Collect platform, which now boasts more than 1,000 network pharmacies.

General manager Aaron D'Souza said "for eCommerce to work in pharmacy we need synergies between suppliers and the pharmacy network.

"Bananaboat has shown it wants to support the community pharmacy industry through digital transformation," he said.

Pharmacy Click and Collect is free and exclusive to Guild member pharmacies, with D'Souza saying that with thousands of consumers visiting the Bananaboat website each month, pharmacies on the platform should see these customers flowing instore - pharmacyclickandcollect.com.au.

Special PBAC meeting

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) will convene a Special Meeting on 17 Aug 2018 to consider options for listing programmed death-ligand 1 (PDL1) cancer immunotherapies for the treatment of multiple tumours on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

The meeting is being organised in response to a formal request from Health Minister Greg Hunt.

The PBAC has noted that while it is likely that PDL1 inhibitors will be useful for treating a range of cancers, limited trial results to date suggest that treatment responses are not uniform across different types of cancers, different age groups and different patient populations.

A background paper is being prepared in the lead-up to the meeting - expressions of interest to PBAC@health.gov.au.

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Dispensary Corner

AUSTRALIANS love to do a bit of DIY around the house, but it appears at least one woman has taken this humble household hobby to a medical extreme.

A mother-of-three from the UK was recently reported to have performed a breast implant removal on herself after deciding she was tired of her F-cup bust.

After learning the procedure would be quite expensive and that she would have to join a long waiting list, the woman weighed up her options and decided to turn her bathroom into an impromptu operating theatre.

And what was the surgical implement of choice we hear you reluctantly ask? A garden variety box cutter if you will.

Now that's what we call "elective surgery" - please don't try this at home.



THE medical debate surrounding the safety of police officers using taser guns is still the subject of a robust public policy debate, but until then it's nice to know the guys in blue can make amends through some solid baking skills.

Officer Darcy Workman from Ohio says she accidentally shocked firefighter Rickey Wagoner with her stun gun while making an arrest.

To apologise, she baked him a cake iced with "Sorry I tased you".

I'm sure when he regains consciousness and a regular heartbeat he will appreciate it.

Simpler relations

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has welcomed the release of a new position paper on workplace relations simplification.

The document from Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Kate Carnell - who also happens to be a former community pharmacist as well as being one-time ACT Chief Minister - highlights some of the complexities and hurdles facing small businesses as they strive to comply with their responsibilities as employers.

"The Guild urges and supports all of our pharmacy-owner members to comply fully with all workplace legal requirements including all obligations under the Fair Work Act.

"But this compliance is sometimes made difficult for small businesses when faced with unnecessary complexity," the Guild noted.

The Ombudsman has identified areas where complexity could be addressed without legislative changes, including measures around unfair dismissal and a 'safe harbour' for businesses which make errors despite genuine efforts to comply with requirements.

View the paper at asbfeo.gov.au.

EpiPen shortages for "some months"

ALPHAPHARM Pty Ltd has advised the Therapeutic Goods Administration that stock levels of EpiPen (adult) will not return to normal for some months.

Currently supply of the adrenaline auto-injectors is constrained due to manufacturing delays, with Mylan Australia having created a dedicated EpiPen Customer Service Toll-Free hotline on 1800 931 625 to address enquiries.

The company also noted it was working closely with the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology & Allergy, as well as Allergy & Anaphalaxys Australia.

Mylan has advised patients that despite the supply issues stock continues to be distributed, but warned they may need to leave prescriptions at the pharmacy while stock is ordered.

Pharmacists should contact primary wholesalers to obtain stock, and continue to place orders even if the wholesaler portal indicates no stock because "stock is being shipped continually".

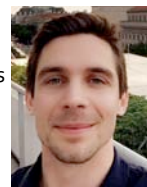
Orders should be refreshed on a weekly basis, as back orders are being cancelled after any partial shipment of stock to pharmacies.

Mylan has also advised pharmacists who are encountering problems with ordering stock to email au.sales.support@mylan.com "to obtain instructions on how to access direct supply".

Supply of EpiPen Jnr 150mcg is not affected.



Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature. This week's contribution is from **Dr Joe Firth, Research Fellow, National Institute of Complementary Medicine (NICM).**



Certain Nutrients May Improve Recovery in Early Psychosis

EXTENSIVE research in long-term psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia, has established that nutritional deficiencies are common in this population. Furthermore, targeted supplementation with certain nutrients can reduce some schizophrenia symptoms.

Until now however, the role of nutritional deficits and supplementation in young people within the early stages of psychosis has been largely unexplored. Therefore, researchers from 'NICM Health Research Institute' systematically reviewed all of the evidence in this field.

The researchers' first analyses pooled data from 28 independent studies examining blood levels of six vitamins and ten dietary minerals across thousands of early psychosis patients. The meta-analyses showed that people with early psychosis have large, significant deficits in blood levels of Vitamin-D, Vitamin-C, and Vitamin-B9 (folate) compared to regular healthy people. These deficits existed from the very onset of psychosis, even prior to any antipsychotic treatment.

The team followed this up with a systematic review of nutritional supplements in early psychosis. This identified 8 experimental studies; with trials indicating clinical benefits from amino acid supplementation in early psychosis (particularly taurine and n-acetyl cysteine). There was also a complete absence of studies examining effects of b-vitamin or multi-nutrient supplementation - presenting these as potentially useful adjunctive treatments for future trials.

Win with SkinB5

This week *Pharmacy Daily* & *SkinB5* are giving away each day the Acne Control Caplets.

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