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Hunt to announce meningococcal plan

HEALTH Minister Greg Hunt is set to today announce a \$52 million national meningococcal ACWY immunisation program, with the federal scheme expected to replace the existing patchwork of state-funded vaccination programs.

However a lack of uniformity in regulations across different jurisdictions mean pharmacists are unlikely to universally be able to assist in administering the vaccine.

Under the plan, the quadrivalent vaccine Nimenrix will be added to the National Immunisation Schedule from Apr 2019 for people aged 14-19 who will mostly receive it under school-based programs.

A catch-up program for those who miss out on school vaccinations will also be available via GPs.

Currently only Tasmanian pharmacists are able to vaccinate for meningococcal (**PD** 27 Jul 2018).

A Guild spokesperson said if the PBS-funded ACWY vaccine is added to the National Immunisation Program potentially pharmacists in Victoria and WA would have access, subject to state health authorities.

"We certainly need a uniform sensible approach to maximise access," the Guild said.

Pharmacists celebrated

TODAY marks World Pharmacists Day, with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) highlighting a parliamentary tribute to the profession last week by Member for Dobell and pharmacist Emma McBride.

McBride's statement to the House of Representatives last Thu saw her supporting World Pharmacists Day "emphasising our role as trusted sources of knowledge and advice for not only patients but other healthcare professionals.

"With medicine now the number one intervention in primary care, it's appropriate that pharmacists play a role in managing medication over the long term."

World Pharmacists Day, an initiative of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), this year explores the theme of "Pharmacists: Your medicines experts and so much more".

FIP president Dr Carmen Pena said the annual day aims to celebrate "the extensive expertise that pharmacists have and put to use every day to ensure better patient health.

"This expertise is applied through science and research, through

educating the next generation, and through transforming patient needs into services," she said.

PSA national president Dr Shane Jackson said Australia was missing out on the opportunity for pharmacists to do more with medicines by confining them largely to dispensing.

"Pharmacists, especially those in community pharmacy, want to have a suite of services available to them to be able to assist the patient in medication management," he said.

The Pharmacy Board of Australia has also recognised the professional expertise of pharmacists, with Board Chair William Kelly saying "as medicines experts, pharmacists perform an important function in a variety of healthcare environments".

He said World Pharmacists Day was a key opportunity to highlight the integral part pharmacists play in collaborative patient care across a variety of settings.

Today Emma McBride will celebrate the role of pharmacists during a visit to an atrial fibrillation screening site at the Westfield Tuggerah shopping centre on the NSW Central Coast.

Chemist Warehouse footy promotion

CHEMIST Warehouse is set to kick some major promotional goals this week end, with two of the biggest "brand activations" it has ever undertaken.

It's grand final weekend for both the AFL and NRL competitions, and Chemist Warehouse will have a huge presence - in the form of almost 200,000 seat cushions (**pictured**).

100,000 seat cushions filled with premium products will be placed on each seat of the Melbourne Cricket Ground ahead of the 2018 Toyota AFL Grand Final this Sat 29 Sep, while another 83,500 will be put on the seats at Sydney's ANZ Stadium for the NRL Telstra Grand Final which takes place on Sun.

In addition, during a break at each match one lucky Chemist Warehouse customer will be given the opportunity to kick for a chance to win one million dollars.



Happy World Pharmacists Day

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National Pharmacies hails suppliers



SOUTH Australia-based National Pharmacies has honoured its top suppliers for 2018 in a ceremony at Adelaide Oval last Thu 20 Sep.

The awards recognised the companies for their outstanding support throughout the year.

“Our suppliers form an integral part of who we are as a company, the annual supplier awards evening is our opportunity to thank them for their continued support throughout the year”, said National Pharmacies managing director Tony Wojciechowski.

This year the second inductee to the “National Pharmacies Lifetime Award” was announced: Andrew & Peter Searcy of Searcy Marketing for their partnership with National Pharmacies which has extended for more than 40 years.

Peter Searcy is aged over 90 and continues to work three days a week, “a living testament to their level of support and passion,” National Pharmacies said.

Other suppliers recognised on the night included Sandoz, Mylan Australia, 3M, Groupe Clarins and Maui Jim Australia.

Individuals cited included Brad Newlands from Mimo who received the Optical Award for Service Excellence; Sanofi’s Tracey Waye

who took out the Ethical Award for Service Excellence; and Raquel Clarke from Ego Pharmaceuticals for the Retail Award for Service Excellence.

Pictured above from left at the awards are Andrew Searcy, Tony Wojciechowski, Peter Searcy, Sue Boucher and Prue Warner.

Opdivo liver cancer TGA approval

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has given Bristol-Myers Squibb the nod to market Opdivo (nivolumab) for its eleventh indication in Australia, as monotherapy for hepatocellular carcinoma.

This is the first immuno-oncology therapy approved in Australia for this condition, but is not yet funded on the PBS.

Associate Professor Simone Strasser, Senior Staff Specialist at the AW Morrow Gastroenterology and Liver Centre, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, said the introduction of the new option for immuno-oncology therapy was welcome news for liver cancer patients and healthcare professionals.

Psychotropics tool

IN THE face of mainstream media highlighting the plight of nursing home residents being plied with excess doses of psychotropics to control their behaviour, two research pharmacists and a research nurse have developed a tool to assist.

Their published paper is titled ‘Psychotropic medicines use in Residents And Culture: Influencing Clinical Excellence (PRACTICE) tool - A development and content validation study’.

Sydney University pharmacists Mouna Sawan and Timothy F. Chen from the School of Pharmacy together with nurse researcher Yun-Hee Jeon from the Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery, identified a gap in existing tools to manage the link between organisational culture and the use of psychotropic medicines.

Organisational culture was named as a “key factor” contributing to the high level of use of prescribed psychotropics in nursing homes.

The new tool is designed to help “inform managers and policy makers to identify target areas for improvement to create a culture of appropriate psychotropic prescribing in nursing homes”.

CLICK HERE for the abstract.

E-cigs supported

THE annual ‘Stoptober’ campaign in England is embracing e-cigarettes for the first time, with vaping seen as a key to getting people to quit.

This runs counter to health experts who have tended to shy away from explicitly promoting e-cigarettes.

The government campaign during Oct will feature vaping in its TV advertisements for the first time.

The UK’s National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advises that patients should be told that there “is currently little evidence on the long-term benefits or harms of these products”.

Cannabis pain queries

NEW research analysing existing data relating to cannabinoid drugs for pain relief has found they may prevent the onset of pain by increasing pain thresholds, but may not actually reduce the intensity of pre-existing pain or help people who are hyper-sensitive to pain.

However, the drugs may make pain less unpleasant and more tolerable, say the researchers, who analysed 18 controlled studies, involving a total of 422 participants.

The analysis was published in *JAMA Psychiatry* - **CLICK HERE**.



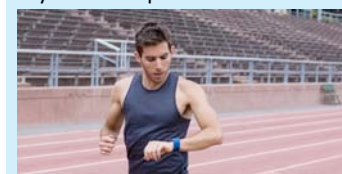
Dispensary Corner

AMERICAN life insurance company John Hancock has begun offering its life insurance policy holders incentives to be healthier including a reduction in premiums if they wear a fitness tracker.

Rewards will also be on offer for clients who regularly exercise, eat healthily and ensure they get along to the doctor for regular medical check ups.

The company's innovative approach to health insurance is driven by a range of data it collects which suggests that its current Vitality policy holders live 13–21 years longer than the rest of the population, and also have 30% lower hospitalisation costs.

Although there is certainly some merit in incentivising a healthy lifestyle, we sincerely hope the methods stop short of analysing any stool samples.



WE ARE fairly confident that most people's idea of fun doesn't typically extend to confronting your own mortality, however, a theme park in the US is challenging that idea by asking visitors to stay locked up in a coffin for 30 hours.

The winner of the Missouri Six Flags' Fright Fest competition will score US\$300 and two 2019 Gold Season Passes - oh and you get to keep the coffin too.

With contestants needing to stay in the coffin at all times, maybe lay off the water & snacks - things could get ugly in there!

Pharmacists can support GPs

ALLOWING pharmacists to operate "to the full extent of their training and abilities" would help ease the growing pressure on general practitioners "facing a mental health epidemic," said the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland Branch yesterday.

Mental health and obesity are the two biggest concerns doctors have for the future, and where they want to see more government action, according to the latest snapshot of national trends for GPs released by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

Guild Queensland Branch president Professor Trent Twomey said the findings of the 'General Practice Health of the Nation 2018' report, showed psychological health concerns topped the list of GP treated healthcare conditions.

"This RACGP report shows GPs everywhere face an uphill battle in treating the number of patients who are seeking treatment for mental health issues," Twomey said.

"The quickest way to take

pressure off the system and our GPs is by allowing community pharmacists to work to their full potential to treat minor conditions, administer vaccinations to children and continue to dispense medicines already prescribed, saving patients repeat visits to a doctor."

Twomey emphasised pharmacists are "highly trained health professionals who are trusted by the communities they serve," and also stressed the current ownership model relying on "personal trust", pharmacists being directly accountable and liable for the services they provide, especially in regional and rural areas.

In Queensland, more than 1,100 community pharmacies receive 70 million individual visits annually from patients and are the most accessed and the most accessible primary health facilities in the state.

Twomey argued Queensland pharmacists have a more restricted role than their counterparts in other states and comparable countries overseas.

Win with ThinOptics

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and ThinOptics are giving away a pair of their take everywhere reading glasses valued at \$34.95.

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To win, be the first from QLD to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.



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Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Fiona Evans.

Pharmacy Guild Update

PA2018

PHARMACY staff who attend the Pharmacy Assistant National Conference (PA2018) will benefit from updated knowledge of our evolving industry.

Pharmacy assistants will learn across a variety of topics to help gain a competitive advantage and maximise pharmacy performance, including QCPP refresher training, how to better engage with local communities, companion selling, dealing with difficult customers, and incorporating professional services.

Conference Convenor and pharmacy owner Kos Sclavos AM said investing in staff education was as important as investing in your business.

"Your front line determines your bottom line. Investing in staff education is the most valuable investment as the return on investment is continuous," Sclavos said.

PA2018 will be held from 25-27 Oct on the Gold Coast, and provides the premium forum for pharmacy assistants to gain product knowledge, professional and personal development, and management skills.

To download the full program and to register your staff, visit www.pharmacyassistants.com.