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1,600 pharmacies in Chronic Pain Trial

MORE than 1,600 community pharmacies across Australia are now taking part in the Chronic Pain MedsCheck Trial (**PD** 06 Sep 2018).

The Trial sees pharmacies work with patients who are taking medication to deal with chronic pain that has been ongoing for three months or longer.

A Chronic Pain MedsCheck sees a pharmacist evaluate and review a patient's medicine and the pain management program they are undertaking to ensure it supports their clinical need.

The Trial is funded under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement, with all participating pharmacists required to complete CPD accredited training modules before conducting trial interventions.

No to 2-month scripts

TOMORROW'S Federal Budget is unlikely to include a controversial measure which would have allowed dispensing of two months' supply of about 140 PBS-listed items, after reassurance by Health Minister Greg Hunt that he now believes the plan needs more consultation.

The Pharmacy Guild ran full page newspaper advertisements last week about the measure (**PD** 28 Mar) while Guild President, George Tambassis also issued an impassioned statement arguing about the unforeseen downside - including a significant hit to community pharmacy viability.

AMA President Tony Bartone slammed the Guild advertisement, saying it simply aimed to protect pharmacy business bottom lines.

CSO distributors named

THE Health Department has announced the appointment of six Community Service Obligation (CSO) distributors, following a tender process (**PD** 03 Dec 2018) which impacted the controversial direct supply arrangements for some medicines.

The Invitation to Apply has seen Australian Pharmaceutical Industries, Sigma Healthcare, Symbion and Clifford Hallam Healthcare (CH2) all appointed as national CSO distributors, alongside state distributors National Pharmacies (Friendly Society Medical Association) in SA and Barrett Distributors in Vic.

The new arrangements formally commence today, 01 Apr 2019, and will run until 30 Jun 2020 with the option of an initial extension of two years, and provision for two more one-year extensions which would take the CSO distributor timeline out to 30 Jun 2024.

Wholesaler peak body, the National Pharmaceutical Services Association, has welcomed the announcement, which includes its four member organisations, Sigma, Symbion, API and National Pharmacies.

Managing SUD

GUILD Learning and Development has developed a CPD-accredited guide to help pharmacists to provide education and support to patients with Substance Use Disorder (SUD), beyond the provision of medications to manage the condition.

Details at guided.guild.org.au.

NPSA Chairman and Sigma CEO Mark Hooper said "the CSO is a world-class example of public health policy that supports the national interest.

"Government, pharmacists and patients benefit despite the unique logistical and cost challenges of medicine distribution in a country the size of Australia," he said.

Hooper said the CSO ensures that all Australians, regardless of location, can rely on timely delivery of PBS medicines to and through their community pharmacy.

"The NPSA remains committed to working with the Government to uphold the strict standards of the CSO...the NPSA believes in a CSO that is open and fair for all who meet its standards," he said.

Hooper also said the NPSA looked forward to continued engagement with the Department of Health over the duration of the new contracts.

"It is our hope that we can work toward extending the Deeds for as long as possible," he said.

Pharmacy rich-listers

CHEMIST Warehouse co-founders Mario Verocchi and Jack Gance have come in at 58th and 60th position respectively in a list of 250 of Australia's richest people released on Sat by *The Australian*.

Verocchi's fortune is estimated at \$1.47 billion, just ahead of Gance at \$1.46 billion, with the report noting "the pair run the business from the northern Melbourne suburb of Preston, near where they bought their first chemist in 1973".

Other industry identities in the list include Jina Chen and Alex Wu, co-founders of Nature's Care with a combined \$899 million fortune; PharmaCare founder Toby Browne in 154th spot with \$635 million, overseeing brands like Nature's Way, Bioglan & Fat Blaster; Blackmores Executive Director (and now acting CEO) Marcus Blackmore in 189th position on the list with \$545 million; and Alan & Irene Messer who sold their Life-Space probiotics business last year, in 224th and 225th spot with \$422 million combined.

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Dispensary Corner

THINGS smelt a little off in a Welsh pharmacy recently, when a shopper attempted to return a bottle of perfume they had purchased online.

The discovery sparked pharmacy owner, Raj Aggarwal, into action and it soon became apparent that the store's executive manager, Maria Andrade, had stolen 127 Chanel products worth £7,620, and flogged them on eBay.

A subsequent internal investigation revealed that Andrade's online side hustle was just the tip of the iceberg.

As a trusted assistant, Aggarwal had given Andrade responsibility for the pharmacy's finances, which in hindsight was not a great decision, as investigators found she had manipulated the payroll by including details of former employees who were not due to be paid and diverting funds into her bank account.

Newport Crown Court heard that between Jan 2015 and Nov 2016 Andrade obtained just under £38,000 through this creative accounting process, while she took another £10,000 by claiming Aggarwal had agreed to lend her the money.

WalesOnline reported that Andrade sent a further £7,430 offshore, claiming it was to pay for tax in Germany, however, the funds were directed to her brother's struggling construction company in Portugal.

In total the once trusted employee's deception cost the pharmacy £62,860 (A\$115,000).

While Andrade admitted to three counts of fraud, apart from these matters her lawyer said she was an "impeccable employee".

Union to sign 7CPA

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has welcomed Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt's decision to invite Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) to be a signatory to the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement.

The Guild said having the union involved would give employee pharmacists a "clear picture of the challenges facing owners".

Axe the fax - ADHA

THE Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) has announced an incentive to accelerate clinical software provider adoption of standards to deliver enhanced secure messaging functionality into systems by 2020.

Eliminating paper-based messaging in healthcare is a priority of the National Digital Health Strategy, with the new incentive providing \$30,000 to software vendors to integrate the updated standards into their systems.

New interoperability standards for secure messaging were agreed by the software industry, the clinical community and the ADHA last year - see digitalhealth.gov.au.

GP slams pharmacy vaccinations

ROYAL Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) President, Harry Nespolon, thinks pharmacy flu jabs stink.

Speaking to *Nine News* about pharmacist-administered flu vaccinations, Nespolon accused pharmacists of pushing unrelated products on patients while giving them the jab.

He also questioned the wisdom of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's current flu immunisation campaign, which urges the public to visit a pharmacy or their GP to get vaccinated now (*PD* 29 Mar).

"You might be confronted with 'do you want a bottle of perfume with your flu vax,'" Nespolon said.

With the flu season traditionally between Jun and Sep, the RACGP President suggested patients would be advised to get their flu vaccination from their GP in mid-Apr or early May.

However, Guild Victorian branch president Anthony Tassone noted the number of confirmed cases for the year to date was significantly higher than at same stage last year.

Responding to Nespolon's comments, Tassone took to Twitter to suggest the comments meant the RACGP was not interested in collaborative patient care.

"The snipe by @HarryNespolon @RACGPpresident on pharmacy... says more about you than anybody else," he tweeted.

"Let us know when you're ready to be a team player in patient care."

"In the meantime stay classy."



Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is



Kimberley Nieuwenhuize, Digital Marketing Specialist at instigo pharmacy consulting.

The Benefits of Social Media for Pharmacy

DOES your pharmacy have a social media presence? In today's busy world, people have grown accustomed to getting information quickly. Within seconds customers can now look up and see everything they need to know about your business without taking a step out the door.

Having a Facebook account provides your pharmacy with access to current and potential customers and presents you with a number of ways that you can now communicate with them. You can now get your messages out to more people with the push of a button, which can be extremely beneficial for situations where the need to get information out quickly is paramount. This can be used for things like specific vaccination availability or weather events that could impact your customer's health.

Social media is also a great way to build trust and rapport between you and your customers without them physically coming into the pharmacy. By sharing studies, keeping your community up to date with the latest new health information, and advertising your services you can really solidify your position in your community's minds and news feeds as a place to go for expert health advice.

Win with PURE Papaya

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and PURE Papaya are giving away a prize pack valued at \$48.95.

100% Natural skin care range perfect for use by the whole family. PURE range includes Vapour Balm (Chest rub), Papaya Ointment (ultra-rich multi use skin food), Papaya Renew (Scars & Stretch marks), Papaya Lips (lip balm to nourish & protect). Visit Purepapayacare.com.au to find out more.



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