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## Cannabis scripts grow

**ASX-LISTED** medicinal cannabis provider, Althea Group, is reporting rapid growth in prescriptions.

In a statement to investors, Althea said quarter-on-quarter sales had jumped by 151% in the three months to 31 Mar.

Since May 2018 more than 500 patients had been prescribed Althea’s cannabis products, CEO Joshua Fegan revealed, with prescriptions being written by 128 healthcare professionals.

“We experienced very strong growth in the recent quarter, particularly in the back half when doctors returned from their Jan holidays,” he said.

“We further expanded our Medical Liaison team in Mar and we are already seeing great results, with the first few day of Apr being the best start to any month on record,” Fegan added.

“Our team remains committed to educating healthcare professionals and supporting patient access to Althea’s pharma-grade medical cannabis products.”

## ASMI wary of Appendix M

**THE** Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is seeking clarity over concerns the introduction of Appendix M may lead to pharmacist prescribing as an alternative to down-scheduling products.

The proposed introduction of Appendix M by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), could pave the way for some prescription medicines including the contraceptive pill, sildenafil and triptans, to be reclassified as pharmacist-only.

In its submission to the TGA, ASMI said, “there should be clear policy advice that pharmacist prescribing and emergency prescribing are different and these are not a substitute for Schedule 4 (S4) to S3 down-scheduling”.

“ASMI supports Appendix M and welcomes the development of guidance to assist applicants,” the industry group said.

“We note that pharmacists already play an important role in assessment of suitability for

supply of S3 medicines, as well as provision of counselling and advice to consumers and we believe that Appendix M will strengthen these activities.

“However, ASMI is also concerned that Appendix M may fuel some existing negative attitudes and perceptions regarding S4 to S3 rescheduling, which may make it difficult for Appendix M entries to be developed and accepted.

“A proposal to include an Appendix M entry with a rescheduling application should not be perceived as an admission that the scheduling factors for S3 cannot be met or that rescheduling is not appropriate.

“The intent of Appendix M should be to mitigate risk, that it enhances safety and appropriate provision of certain newly down-scheduled medicines, as well as facilitating innovation; Appendix M should not be perceived as an obstacle to rescheduling.”

The full submission can be viewed at [asmi.com.au](http://asmi.com.au).

## PD’s salary survey

**PHARMACY Daily** is giving its retail pharmacy readers the opportunity to win one of three Sport Video Cameras or one of five EVENT Cinemas double passes, simply by completing a brief survey.

The poll is being conducted by independent research company StollzNow Research, with responses from participants completely de-identified as we collate a report about the employment, salary and work plans of the industry.

Owners, employee pharmacists, pharmacy managers, interns and pharmacy assistants are eligible to participate, with the survey consisting of a series of simple questions to allow us to gather a picture of the industry.

Trends uncovered by the survey, which takes about five minutes to complete, will be published in a future issue of **Pharmacy Daily**, with entries open from today until Sun 14 Apr, so get in quick!

[Click here for survey](#)



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Pharmacy Daily



## Flomaxtra patient program live

**ARROW** Pharmaceuticals has partnered with PharmaPrograms to facilitate the new Flomaxtra Patient Program through community pharmacies.

Flomaxtra (tamsulosin hydrochloride) tablets 0.4mg is an authority RPBS item and a private prescription-only medicine for other patients, used to treat men who have symptoms associated with Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia.

The pharmacist-led program aims to improve medication compliance and persistence by facilitating communication between pharmacists and patients.

Doctors will inform their patients of participating Flomaxtra Patient Program Network pharmacy locations via an online portal.

The program is administered using a designated Patient Information Leaflet with key Quality Use of Medicines issues to be discussed with the patient.

PharmaPrograms will facilitate the program - more on 1300 689 575.

## PATY nominations

**THIS** year's Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year Award (PATY) is off to a strong start, with over 200 nominations already received.

Applications officially opened at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition last month, and third party nominations for PATY 2019 will close on 24 May.

Now in its 13th year, PATY is the premier Award for approximately 35,000 pharmacy assistants in Australia, providing a public platform to recognise pharmacy assistants as valued health care professionals to employers, the community and the industry.

Last year a record-breaking 750 nominations were received, with 2019 aiming to surpass this figure showcasing the strong talent of frontline community pharmacy staff.

Anyone can nominate a deserving pharmacy assistant by 24 May, with nominations accepted from pharmacy owners, pharmacists, industry representatives, customers, family and friends.

Pharmacy assistants can also self-nominate before 07 Jun 2019.

The national winner will be announced at the Pharmacy Assistant National Conference in Brisbane on 12 Oct this year.

State finalists and winners will be eligible for a range of prizes, while the overall winner will receive \$5,000 in cash and a Guild Training course among other rewards.

For more information and to nominate a deserving pharmacy assistant see the awards website at [pharmacyassistants.com/paty](http://pharmacyassistants.com/paty).

## Lung Foundation honour



**MELBOURNE** pharmacist Peter Guthrey has been honoured by Lung Foundation Australia with a Significant Achievement Award.

Guthrey was recognised for his extensive work with the Foundation, having been a member of the Foundation's Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Coordinating Committee for the last decade.

He was also an inaugural member of the COPD Pharmacy Committee, formed to develop online COPD training for pharmacists, and took over as Committee Chair three years ago, significantly increasing the profile of the Lung Foundation in the pharmacy community.

"Pharmacists are now more engaged in delivering activities to support lung health, from COPD case-finding to supporting medicine adherence and inhaler device technique," according to the Lung Foundation website.

Guthrey is **pictured** receiving his accolade from Lung Foundation Australia Chair, Christine Jenkins.

## Lumpy Mylanta

**JOHNSON & Johnson** Pacific has issued a "product defect correction" for Mylanta Double Strength Oral Liquid 500mL.

It has been identified that soft lumps may form in one batch of the product (batch number 1079278 expiry June 2020), particularly if the bottle is not vigorously shaken prior to use as per label directions.

J&J said soft lumps in the liquid can be easily visually detected when poured, and can usually be addressed by vigorous shaking.

"However Johnson & Johnson Pacific is offering refunds to any consumers who continue to have issues or are dissatisfied," according to an update on the Therapeutic Goods Administration website.

Consumers are also reminded that after opening the product is to then be refrigerated and discarded after six months, regardless of the expiry date printed on the pack.

Refunds can be arranged by contacting J&J on 1800 029 979.

## FIP2018 earlybird

**THE** International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is reminding prospective attendees for the 79th World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences that earlybird pricing is available for registrations before 10 Jun 2019.

The event takes place in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates from 21-26 Sep, with the full program and registration details at [abudhabi2019.congress.pharmacy](http://abudhabi2019.congress.pharmacy).

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### Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist Manager** - Great Ocean Road, VIC (Job# 200032253)  
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- **Pharmacist** - Bundaberg, QLD (Job# 200031894)  
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- **Pharmacist Manager** - Hunter Valley, NSW (Job# 200031820)  
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## Get ready for cannabis, Qld

QUEENSLAND-based pharmacists are being urged to prepare for the critical role they will play in dispensing medicinal cannabis following legislative reforms in the state, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

Under legislation passed by State Parliament this week, medicinal cannabis will be treated in the same fashion as other drugs of addiction and prescription medications.

Welcoming the decision Qld Guild branch president, Professor Trent Twomey, said the decision to repeal the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Act 2016, would reduce red tape and improve access to the drug for patients in need.

"This year, the number of approvals for SAS-B medicinal cannabis products increased to

over 700 nationally. We can see that doctors are becoming more comfortable to prescribe medicinal cannabis in situations where they deem the product to be appropriate," he said.

"Under the latest changes, medicinal cannabis will be treated the same as schedule 8 medicines or schedule 4 medicines, improving patient access," he said, adding that it was vital for pharmacists to understand the key clinical role they will play regarding dose administration and titration issues regarding various products.

"The Guild encourages all pharmacies to be ready and willing to assist patients with enquires regarding medicinal cannabis products," Twomey said.

Announcing the legislative reform, Qld Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Steven Miles, described the new laws as "the most progressive in the country".

"This law change will significantly streamline the prescription process by removing state-level approval and will ensure patients have access to the treatment they need sooner," he said.

Miles said he looked forward to the fledgling Australian medicinal cannabis industry progressing plans to take locally made products to market, including several companies working towards manufacturing facilities in Queensland.

Under the new laws non-specialist practitioners will still require a state-based approval for S8 medicinal cannabis.



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## Grattan's Policy Pitch

WITH a Federal Election due to be announced any day, the Grattan Institute will be hosting a Policy Pitch event on 17 Apr in Melbourne.

The think tank's health expert, Stephen Duckett, will be among a panel of speakers covering a range of topics that are likely to feature extensively throughout the election campaign, including health, climate-change and infrastructure.

For more details and to register for the event click [HERE](#).

## Cost an asthma factor

YOUNG men are likely to be put off taking preventative asthma medication because of cost factors, a new study reveals.

Research carried out by the George Institute and University of Sydney found more than 50% of adults with asthma, reported decreasing use or skipping doses of medication because of the cost of the drugs.

"Higher odds of cost-related underuse were observed with younger adults [and] males," the authors said.

"Urgent targeting of interventions to promote discussion of medicines and costs between doctor and patients, particularly young adult males, is needed."

The authors also cited high rates of cost-related underuse of asthma medicines in parents of children with the condition.

The study was published last week in *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice* - for more see [jacl.inpractice.org](http://jacl.inpractice.org).

## Busy day for TGA

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) yesterday highlighted concerns about five products, all of which it said "pose a serious risk to your health and should not be taken".

The items include Meizitang Botanical Soft Gel Capsules, JOYSMI Capsules, X Power 3 Tablets, Magnum XXL Capsules (pictured) and Lotus Flower Capsules.



Undeclared substances in the products included sildenafil, sibutramine, phenolphthalein, frusemide, tadalafil, glibenclamide, diclofenac and a derivative of fenfluramine.

The TGA reiterated consumer warnings to exercise extreme caution when purchasing medicines from unknown overseas websites.

## 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](http://Purepapayacare.com.au) to find out more.

To win, be the first from VIC or TAS to send the correct answer to the question to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

**What unnatural ingredients do other paw paw products contain?**

*Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Rebecca Larcombe.*



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## Dispensary Corner

**CANADIAN** singer-songwriter, Steve Poltz, may be making a surprise bid to be the headline act at APP 2020 next Mar.

Poltz, who is best known for his work on Jewel's hit 'You Were Meant For Me', has produced a lusty pharmacy-focused ballad for his latest solo album *Shine On*.

The single, *Pharmacist*, was written after a having coffee with a songwriting friend, who had just picked up a script and was musing about what it would be like to fall in love (or lust) with a pharmacist.

"He was saying that it would be funny if you had a crush on your pharmacist and you kept wanting to get sick and get more prescriptions," Poltz explained.

"I loved the idea so we immediately sat down and got caffeinated and wrote that sucker.

"It's one of my favourite tracks on the record," he said.

Here is a sample of the lyrics:

*I feel so far from me  
I could use a pharmacy  
And if you got something for this  
Would ya be my PHARMACIST?  
I know there's a hierarchy  
But they'd probably fire me  
Now tell me, tell me, can you  
handle this?  
Would ya be my PHARMACIST?  
And you can ask me; What is the  
last four of my social number  
You can tell me that my  
prescription is only for my lower  
lumbar; And I could ask you  
if you've got something for a  
chronic emotional fumbler?  
And could I have your number?*

Who knows, maybe this will be played at pharmacy weddings for years to come! Watch the video at [pharmacydaily.com.au/videos](http://pharmacydaily.com.au/videos).

## UK pharmacy staffing fears

**CONCERNS** are being raised over UK pharmacy staffing levels, with close to three-quarters of British pharmacies reporting they only staffed appropriately half the time.

The Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) 2018 patient safety survey found just 3% of respondents reported always having sufficient staffing levels to avoid adverse effects on patient safety.

The survey found pharmacists working for large multiples including supermarket chains, Sainsburys, ASDA and Tesco, and Lloydspharmacy and Boots, were more likely to report being understaffed more than half the time.

However, respondents employed by supermarket group, Morrisons,

were the most likely to report that their store was always staffed appropriately (11.1%).

Across the UK, pharmacies in Scotland were the most likely to be understaffed half the time or more (75%), while pharmacists working in Welsh stores reported the highest rate of always being staffed appropriately (4.4% of the time).

Adding to patient safety concerns, 69.1% of pharmacists said they were unable to take statutory breaks and rest periods as required to meet their professional obligations more than half the time, with 100% of pharmacists employed by Sainsburys claiming the most likely to report not being able to take their breaks.

Tesco pharmacists reported the highest rate of being able to take their breaks as required, with one-in-five saying they always took breaks.

The survey also found that patients visiting independent pharmacies had greater access to a pharmacist compared to those going to a multiple, with 56.7% of independent stores reporting a pharmacist was always available to patients, while pharmacists working for multiples said that was the case in 44% of stores.

## Dementia training

**GUILD** Learning & Development has released a training package on dementia for pharmacy staff.

Modules are available for both pharmacists and pharmacy staff, addressing dementia as a condition and introducing participants to its complex nature, along with a Dementia Training Australia course at [guilded.guild.org.au](http://guilded.guild.org.au).

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Pharmacy Daily

## PBS early for Easter

**THE** Department of Human Services has confirmed PBS Online payments will be paid in advance over Easter.

Payments due on Fri 19 Apr will be processed early so pharmacies receive them on Thu 18 Apr, with no change to the 26 Apr payment.



## Events Calendar

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**27 Apr:** Diabetes Expo 2019; Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre; register here: [www.diabetes-expo.org.au](http://www.diabetes-expo.org.au)

**03 May:** Colloquium 2019; Sofitel Melbourne On Collins; for more info and to register visit: [www.colloquium2019.com.au](http://www.colloquium2019.com.au)

**04 - 05 May:** Pharmeducation Clinical Update Seminar; Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach, Sydney; for details visit: [www.pharmeducation.com.au](http://www.pharmeducation.com.au)

**05 - 13 Jun:** PSA Offshore Refresher Conference; Montreux, Switzerland and Lyon, France; registrations now open: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

**28 - 30 Jun:** ConPharm 2019; Pullman on the Park Melbourne; early bird offer here: [www.aacp.com.au](http://www.aacp.com.au)

**26 - 28 Jul:** PSA19; Hyatt Regency Sydney; early bird registrations now open: [www.psa19.com](http://www.psa19.com)