

MHR 90% uptake



My Health Record

BASED on the number of people eligible for Medicare as at 31 Jan 2019 (25,459,544), the participation rate in My Health Record (MHR) is 90.1%, which means a national opt-out rate of 9.9%, the Australian Digital Health Agency has announced.

While the opt-out period ended on 31 Jan 2019, Australians are able to cancel and have their My Health Record permanently deleted from the system at any time in the future.

Similarly, individuals who may have opted out can create a record at any time if they choose.

At this stage, 4,609 community pharmacies (almost 84%) have registered with the MHR system whereas only 6,902 GP practices (57%) have done so, indicating a level of discomfort, lack of awareness or interest in the system.

More than 20 million prescription documents have been uploaded along with more than 10 million dispense documents.

See more at myhealthrecord.gov.au.

Voter health and costs angst

THE Ipsos Issues Monitor survey published in *Fairfax* media over the weekend has confirmed the time is right for action to address voters' concerns about health and the cost of living, a Pharmacy Guild of Australia spokesperson said.

Australians were asked to select the three most important issues facing the nation, revealing the "cost of living" has replaced healthcare as our primary concern.

"With health and cost-of-living concerns vying for top spot in such a survey, now is the right time for an across the board \$1 reduction in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme co-payments," said the Guild.

The Guild has put forward a Budget proposal which would make medicines more affordable with a 15% reduction in out-of-pocket costs for concession cardholders.

Reducing patient out of pocket costs would make it easier for low income earners to afford the medicines they are prescribed, leading to better Quality Use of Medicines, improved health outcomes and reduced incentive to ration.

The Pharmacy Guild argued its proposal would see the abolition of

the current optional \$1 discounting of the PBS co-payments, which can disadvantaged rural consumers.

"Currently we have concession cardholders in different parts of the country paying different prices for the same subsidised medicine," said Guild National President George Tambassis.

"This measure will fix that, making it fairer for everybody."

The Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation Review unanimously recommended abolishing the \$1 discount, stating that it was inequitable and did not enhance competition.

APC Colloquium open

REGISTRATIONS are now open to attend the Australian Pharmacy Council's (APC's) Colloquium in May this year.

Key topics include how to improve Indigenous health outcomes, engage and support people with mental illness and develop empathy in health professional students and practitioners.

Together we can do more: Education for social accountability across the health professions is a one-day symposium delivering an invigorating and interprofessional program focussing on educating for social accountability.

CLICK HERE for details.

Pharmacy wins cosmetics race

MORE than 5.3 million Australian women purchase cosmetics in an average six months, up from under 4.8 million women in 2014, according to the latest Roy Morgan Research data.

While this growing market is increasingly turning to online options to purchase their cosmetics and skin-care products, almost three quarters of sales are still from bricks and mortar channels.

The biggest winners are still

chemists and pharmacies such as Priceline, Chemist Warehouse and My Chemist, the research shows.

"Now 42% of women who purchase cosmetics in an average six months buy from Chemists/Pharmacies, whether in-store or online, up a significant 9% points from four years ago."

Supermarkets, department stores and discount department stores have all lost ground to the robust pharmacy sector.

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New AusCann CEO

LISTED medicinal cannabis company AusCann has announced the appointment of global pharmaceutical business executive, Ido Kanyon, as Chief Executive Officer commencing 22 May 2019.

Kanyon has held several Quality Assurance and Regulatory Affairs leadership roles at Teva, and was responsible for the company's specialty Medicine multi-billion specialty pipeline portfolio, with the stated goal of maximizing the value of the company's R&D investment on innovative medicines.

AusCann Chairman Dr Mal Washer commented: "Our extensive executive search generated an impressive field of candidates and Ido stood out for his leadership acumen and track record of commercial achievements throughout his career".

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MedAdvisor revenue >\$2m

LISTED digital medication management company MedAdvisor has recorded its first quarter with revenue exceeding \$2 million.



Releasing its first half of FY19 interim results, the company boasted a record operating revenue of \$3.88 million representing a 19% leap above the prior corresponding period (pcp).

Total revenue for the first half was \$3.9 million, also a record for the company which also claimed to operate at a gross margin of 87.6%.

Services provided via PlusOne grew strongly at 280% over the pcp.

The company now has more than 1.1 million patients connected to its platform and continuous growth in Patient Engagement Programs see 17 major pharma companies engaged over the period.

Two US-based executives have now been appointed, Jim Rotstart and Luke Merrow and the company is now ISO27001 compliant as well as aligning its compliance program to address the US HIPAA (Health Insurance Probability

and Accountability Act) regulations.

Another highlight was the signing of an MoU with Zuellig Pharma for a joint venture in SEA.

Around 3,200 pharmacies are now connected with MedAdvisor's platform resulting in more SaaS revenue and more patient growth in the engagement programs.

CEO Robert Read said that both domestically and globally the company is adding more breadth to pharmacy and GP offerings as well as targeting populations with relevant medication programs via the new Health Services Hub.

Diabetes vit C boost

VITAMIN C may prove to be a low-cost option to support people living with diabetes according to a new Deakin Uni study published in the *Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism Journal*.

The widely used vitamin was shown, in a randomised cross-over clinical trial, to improve postprandial glycaemic control and blood pressure in individuals with type 2 diabetes.

Authors concluded that ascorbic acid (vit C) could be used as adjunct therapy to improve glycaemic and blood pressure control, especially post-prandially, in these patients.

CLICK HERE to access the research.

Rash of new risks

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has warned of more dangerous goods flooding into Australia via online purchases, especially weight-loss products.

We reported last week on Boxy Indelar capsules which contained sibutramine but yesterday the TGA posted warnings about three more imports containing the dangerous illegal drug.

ISHOU Fulin Ruan Jiaonang capsules, BASCHI Quick Slimming capsules (**pictured**) and Deli by New Queen capsules all contain sibutramine.

Sibutramine was withdrawn in Oct 2010 after a study showed an increased risk of major cardiac events.

See more detail at tga.gov.au.



WIZARD pharmacy

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- Passionate about systems, process and data.

Please email you cover letter and resume to pm.claremont1@wizardphy.com.au



Dispensary Corner

WANT to extend your career? Then opportunity calls - quit pharmacy and go into politics - your career may exceed your life-span, and that's without drugs. Or so it happened to Charles Lamb (pictured below), a candidate for the role of Mayor of the city of Edmond, Oklahoma. He made it to the final round of the election, even though he passed away in Dec. Lamb, who had been Mayor since Oct 2011, put his name forward for re-election before he died.

When he passed away, it was too late to remove his name from the ballot or to add anyone else. Were he to win on 02 Apr, a mayor would be appointed by Edmond City Council. Opportunists are bizarrely promoting the hapless Lamb to give themselves an even chance.



FINDING your work a little too demanding? Like a change? Some nurses in the Southern Italian city of Naples did and tried a peculiar way to deal with it. Police found the nurses may have released a massive crawl of cockroaches into the Accident and Emergency ward at the Vecchio Pellegrini Hospital. Suspicions were raised when experts identified the invaders originated from South America and some were "disorientated". Pharmacists and nurses vacated the premises stat.

Vaccination access is key

THERE are two main contributors to under-vaccination: "acceptance and access" factors, according to an *Insight* article in the latest *MJA*.

The contribution of each factor varies between high, middle and low income countries and between different populations or cultural groups, the authors wrote.

It has long been argued by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia that more ready access to vaccination via the broadening of pharmacy delivered programs, is one solution to enhance vaccination access.

Paediatric clinician researcher Dr Margie Danchin and post-doctoral researcher Jessica Kaufman wrote, "Incomplete vaccination has been shown to be associated with many logistical factors, including family size, low parental education and missed opportunities or unnecessary delays in vaccine delivery.

"Despite relatively high vaccine coverage rates at present in Australia, with between 90.75% to 94.67% of one, two and five-year-

olds fully vaccinated, low coverage pockets still exist in every state in Australia and at both ends of the socio-economic spectrum."

Murdoch Children's Research Institute and the University of Melbourne, working with Universities of Sydney and Newcastle are developing the first comprehensive and interlinked model of parental acceptance and access barriers to childhood vaccination.

The tool, named the Vaccine Barriers Assessment Tool or VBAT, will consist of a short and a long form - see insightplus.mja.com.au.

Fluorouracil stock

WITH stocks of fluorouracil cream experiencing supply constraints across the country, Apotec advises the availability of its APOC-5FU, the only generic fluorouracil 5% w/w cream, currently available in pharmacy.

It is listed on the RPBS as a-flagged and interchangeable with iNova Pharmaceuticals' Efudix.

Call 1800 276 839 for supply.

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Each day this week Pharmacy Daily and Dreambaby® are giving readers the chance to win Dreambaby®'s new PEE-POD FROG URINAL valued at \$24.95 plus the Dreambaby® Stroller Fan valued at \$12.95.

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

What does the Dreambaby® Frog Urinal help with?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Tania Howlett.



Call for abstracts

CHOOSING Wisely Australia invites healthcare professionals to register and submit abstracts for the 2019 National Meeting to be held at the Epicure Melbourne Cricket Ground, Brunton Avenue, Richmond, on Thu 30 May.

CLICK HERE for details and info.

Guild Update

APP beckons

AUSTRALIA'S leading pharmacy conference, APP2019, kicks off next week and this year features a number of prominent pharmacy leaders from across the world, in addition to the Minister for Health Greg Hunt, Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, and Opposition spokesperson on Health and Medicare Catherine King.

Among the features, eight international pharmacy leaders will share their global perspectives on a range of topics including the role of community pharmacy in pain relief, e-health, remunerated services and practising to full scope.

Don't miss this opportunity to be informed on important industry topics and how these global learnings can be implemented in Australia.

More than 6,500 pharmacists, pharmacy assistants and pharmacy industry representatives from Australia and around the world are expected to attend APP2019 being held from 7-10 March at Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre.

For a full program, speaker profiles and to register online, visit www.appconference.com.