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

PPI authority levels

PHARMACISTS need to ensure they select the correct Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) item code when dispensing high or standard dose proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) following a decision to increase authority approvals required for prescribers.

Under the revised authority requirements, prescribers will need to obtain prior authority approval from the PBS before prescribing PPIs according to an update from the Department of Human Services.

Standard dose PPIs will need the prescription endorsed with a valid streamlined authority code (STREAMLINED).

Prescribers also need to check if their patient is eligible for the PBS, and review the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits to see if any restriction criteria apply.

97.2% of pharmacists compliant

PHARMACISTS have a higher level of compliance than other professions the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) audit data reveals.

In his monthly communique, Pharmacy Board of Australia Chair, Brett Simmonds, reported that 97.2% of pharmacists were fully compliant with the Board's registration requirements, compared to 93.6% of all AHPRA regulated healthcare professionals.

The annual AHPRA audit found there was no action required in the cases of the 2.8% pharmacists who were not fully compliant, who changed their registration type to non-practising or surrendered their registration after being advised they were subject to an audit.

No pharmacists were found to be "noncompliant", in contrast to 0.7% of registered health practitioners found to be noncompliant with one or more standard.

"The Board acknowledges the results of the audit as an indication

that pharmacists understand and are meeting their obligations outlined in registration standards," Simmonds said.

"All Boards have adopted an educational approach to conducting audits, seeking to balance the protection of the public with the use of appropriate regulatory force to manage those practitioners found to be less than fully compliant with the audited standards.

"Since AHPRA began conducting audits in 2012, the majority of practitioners audited have been found to comply with registration standards," he said.

Analysis of the circumstances of non-compliant pharmacists demonstrated two clear groups: those residing overseas, and those no longer practising but maintaining registration.

The audits require practitioners to provide evidence in support of the declarations they made in the previous year's registration renewal application.

FIP tech team launch

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has launched a new forum comprising pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists and pharmacy educators with expertise, experience & interest in technology.

The group is intended to "take ownership of new trends, new technologies, new logistic models and integrate them into everyday work" in community pharmacy, FIP President Dominique Jordan said.

Free kids' glasses

NATIONAL Pharmacies Optical has introduced an offer providing free glasses for any members' child 12 years or under annually, on its family membership plan.

The promotion is in response to recent figures showing about 80% of children report "digital eye strain" from using electronic gadgets such as tablets or phones.

National Pharmacies Optometrist, Helen Pissas, said an estimated 1 in 5 children in Australia suffered from undiagnosed eye problems.



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NAPSA sees fruits of charity labour



THESE representatives of the National Australian Pharmacy Students Association last month visited a newly built health post in Shurmo, Ethiopia which was constructed through the generous support or the organisation's 2018 Charity Cup campaign.

The 2018 fundraiser was conducted in partnership with the Fullife Foundation (PD 07 Aug 2018) which was founded by pharmacist Ian Shanks, pictured above right.

The Shurmo facility, a few hours south of Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, is operated by International Needs and provides a range of services including vaccination, family planning and maternal health services.

Events hosted by various NAPSA branches across the country during the year contributed more than \$25,000 to the project.

Sustainability in focus for SHPA GRIT

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia has released the latest edition of its *Pharmacy Growth, Research, Innovation and Training (GRIT)* journal which highlights how Australian hospital pharmacists are leading the drive for sustainability.

The special "Green" issue explores issues such as waste minimisation and maximising individual resilience, with the magazine printed on FSC-approved paper and delivered in biodegradable plastic cover slips.

Wholesale promises

THE National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA) has welcomed commitments by both major parties to the future of the pharmaceutical supply chain.

The body representing four of Australia's full-line Community Service Obligation (CSO) wholesalers cited a letter recently received from Health Minister Greg Hunt, reaffirming Coalition support for the work of wholesalers in delivering timely, reliable and affordable access to medicines.

NPSA Chair Mark Hooper said the letter followed acknowledgement of wholesalers by Shadow Health Minister, Catherine King, during the recent Canberra Press Club health debate (PD 03 May).

"Through ongoing discussions with both parties, we have reached a mutual understanding of the importance of upholding a robust policy framework which protects patient access to medicines while also ensuring the ongoing viability of CSO wholesalers is maintained."

Hooper said Hunt had acknowledged independent analysis commissioned by the NPSA which found CSO wholesalers currently deliver 20% more product than originally envisaged with minimal increases to funding, while 85% of items were distributed at a loss.

He said the NPSA looked forward to working post-election toward "redressing the margin structure to ensure the continued viability of CSO wholesaling".



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Sustainable opioid plan

AUSTRALIA needs to adopt an approach that ensures sustainable access to opioids for patients in palliative care, according to Painaustralia CEO Carol Bennett.

In an article posted on *LinkedIn*, Bennett warned "recent regulatory responses to opioid prescribing have seen restrictions and unintended consequences suffered by people who arguably most rely on pain relief, people receiving palliative care".

"It is time we look beyond the blinkered approach of fixing just aged care or particular health issues and recognise that we need to work together to deliver the one thing that is crucial across our all our individual mandates: better care for all Australians," she said.

Bennett said the "shocking and heartbreaking" stories that had emerged from the second round of public evidence hearings for the Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality, highlighted significant failures in pain management.

"Behind all the public outcry and examination of policy failure are the stark faces of over a million older Australians who live with chronic pain, with rates almost twice as high as the working age population...it is estimated up to 80% of aged care residents have chronic pain," she said.

"Pain is now being recognised as a significant factor in behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD).

"When you consider that people living with dementia account for nearly 50% of those living in residential aged care facilities, it is easy to see how untreated chronic pain can result in BPSD, which can further lead to some of the horrific incidents of the inappropriate use of chemical and physical restraints and elder abuse that we have heard this week.

"So how are we managing pain in aged care? Clearly what we are doing is not enough, and most distressing is the way we manage pain at end of life. Stories shared by consumers in our networks paint a story of older people left suffering

through their final days, waiting in angst for pain relief that often arrives too late.

"While inadequate staff training, and insufficient funding to support best practice pain management do contribute to many of the pain management issues we see in aged care, some of the barriers are of our own making," she said, citing recent regulatory responses to opioid prescribing resulting in restrictions and unintended consequences suffered by those who most rely on pain relief, people receiving palliative care.

"This is why Painaustralia has joined Palliative Care Australia and other peak health organisations today in calling for an approach that ensures sustainable access to opioids for Australians receiving palliative care," she concluded.



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Dispensary Corner

DUBLINERS looking for a big night out without the after-effects are expected to be lining up for a new pharmacy-inspired alcohol-free bar.

The very appropriately-named Virgin Mary opened its doors for the first time on Fri 10 May, in the heart of the Irish capital, not far from the city's Guinness brewery, promising patrons a booze-free experience.

Co-owners and veterans of the Irish drinks industry, Vaughan Yates and Oisin Davis, said the interior of The Virgin Mary has been based on a "Dutch pharmacy".

The pub's drinks menu will feature mocktails instead of cocktails, non-alcoholic beers, wines (even champagne) and mixers (with nothing to mix with).

"The idea came from the fact that I think we're at the beginning of a cultural shift in terms of people's attitudes towards alcohol," Yates told the *Independent.ie* news website.

"Timing, people's change to how they moderate what they drink, and the new products that have come out onto the market have made it possible to do this.

"I love spirits, I like drinking good whiskeys and rums, but I did feel there was something missing in the market for people that don't drink.

"I really wanted to open it in Dublin, because I think Dublin has this ingrained culture of drinking," he understatedly added.

Unlike nights out at other establishments in Dublin, patrons of The Virgin Mary probably won't be looking for a pharmacy the following morning.

GP calls for strike

CON Costa, the Vice President of the Doctors Reform Society, has called for the nation's general practitioners to undertake a 24 hour national stoppage.

Costa warned of attempts by both major political parties to implement "health privatisation" and limit doctors' time with patients.

He accused the Royal College of General Practitioners of putting GPs in the position of "beggars at the table," by seeking catch-up funding for the freeze in Medicare rebates.

US biosimilar push

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued its final guidance on the pathway for "interchangeable biologics," which may be substituted without the involvement of the prescriber.

The update gives an overview of scientific considerations in demonstrating interchangeability with a reference product.

The FDA said among other benefits the regulations would help enable biosimilar insulin products to come to market in the future - see the guidance at fda.gov.

Cost-neutral PBS changes for 01 Jun

THE Minister's delegate to the Department of Health has approved several new Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listings for 01 Jun 2019, but only items that will have no financial impact to the budget.

The approvals are in accordance with the "caretaker conventions" in the lead-up to next Sat's Federal Election, which aim to ensure any decisions made during this period do not bind an incoming administration.

The changes include the listing of lymphoma treatment Bleomycin under the \$100 Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy measure, which is being provided to address a supply shortage created by the unavailability of other brands currently listed on the PBS, to ensure continuity of treatment.

A new form of insulin aspart, Fiasp from Novo Nordisk, has been listed for the indication "used to improve blood sugar control in adults with diabetes mellitus", along with a new strength of Vifor Pharma's Ferinject for iron deficiency anaemia which is available for patients already accessing treatment.

The listing of Zarontin (ethosuximide) for the control of petit mal seizures in children and adults with epilepsy has been adjusted for a new pack size, while Shire Australia's Intuniv (guanfacine) for ADHD has had "part of the restriction in regards to continuing therapy" amended to ensure accuracy.



Welcome to Pharmacy Daily's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Judy Cheung-Wood, skinB5 Founder & CEO.**



More insights from the Skin Care and Wellness Survey 2019

SURVEY results identified four key concerns as to what people were most conscious about or had experienced when looking for a solution for acne:

- skin irritation (12%)
- dry skin (17%)
- amount of chemicals in products (18%)
- treatments/products just not working (32%).

Judy Cheung-Wood, CEO of skinB5, comments, "A lot of popular acne products on the market are full of peroxide and harsh chemicals that do more damage than good, so it's important that people are well informed and educated on the right nutritional approach for treating acne as well as skincare ingredients."

There is a growing trend of people becoming more aware and educated in what ingredients are going into their skin care products, with 62% of people saying that they compare ingredients.

These findings confirmed skinB5's experience says Judy Cheung-Wood, "These results and behaviours echo the stories I have heard over the past ten years. The results show us that consumers are becoming increasingly educated on the types of ingredients used in their skin care products, and people are searching for more natural ingredients. SkinB5 provides the best range of high-performing natural ingredients that work together to strategically fight acne."

Next week will cover physical and psychological impacts on acne and breakouts.

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