



Top tippers this week

CONGRATULATIONS to Dean Pollock from Atherton Discount Drug Store, who was the top scorer in this week's *Pharmacy Daily* NRL footy tipping competition.

The top AFL tipper this week was Jay Cavanagh from Giving Brands.

The overall winner of each season will win \$1,000 courtesy of Guild Digital - more details at pharmacydaily.com.au.

POCT survey

THE Commonwealth Department of Health is surveying healthcare providers, including general practices and pharmacies, to gain an overview of how and where point-of-care testing (POCT) is being conducted in Australia.

The survey is being conducted by management consultants, Drajon, with the aim of identifying which tests and the frequency of testing are being provided by health practitioners.

A spokesperson for Drajon said the data will be fully de-identified and "may assist the Department of Health in the design of an eventual POCT funding model and your collaboration in obtaining such information is greatly appreciated."

CLICK HERE to participate.

Pharmacist prescribing danger

MOVES to give pharmacists prescribing rights will compromise patient safety, a former pharmacist turned GP claims.

Hervey Bay GP, Dr Nick Yim, expressed concerns about the Queensland Government's decision to approve a trial of pharmacist prescribing, in an article published in *MJA Insight*.

"As a GP who has worked on both sides of the pharmacy counter, it is something I am very concerned about," he said.

"Before I became a GP, I completed a four-year Bachelor of Pharmacy and worked as a community pharmacist...I then completed a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (four years), residency (two years) and Fellowship training (three years)."

When a patient presents with symptoms of a urinary tract infection, Yim says his 13 years of training and experience help him "to consider that there may be an alternative diagnosis and to ensure there is appropriate management of the condition, followed by adequate health screening and safety netting.

"There are too many unseen risks and potentially higher costs [if

pharmacists prescribe]," he said.

The publication of Dr Yim's article followed the passage of a motion at the Australian Medical Association's national conference in Brisbane on Sat, after doctors voiced their disapproval of "Pharmacy Guild tactics" in promoting pharmacist prescribing and the administering of paediatric vaccinations.

Proposing the motion, Dr Bavahuna Manoharan, called for an immediate end to the Queensland prescribing trial and a reversal of Tasmania's decision to allow pharmacists to provide flu jabs to children aged 10 and older.

In a statement the AMA said that "following contributions from the floor, all in favour of the motion, that went to issues of privacy, evidence-based medicine, incorrect prescribing, and Pharmacy Guild tactics, it was passed easily".

Responding to the AMA's motion, Guild Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone said the association should "immediately cease from scaremongering the public and trying to deter fellow health professionals from practicing their full scope and instead collaborate for patient benefit", in a post on Twitter.

JOBS OF THE WEEK

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Dispensary Corner

FROM fuel to pharmaceuticals - that is the move Irish heating fuel group Bord na Mona is looking to take as it eyes a greener future.

Since 1946 the company has been harvesting peat from bogs around the Emerald Isle and using it to fire hearths in Irish towns and villages, but now seeks to reap an alternative crop - cannabis.

"The growth of medicinal cannabis is being considered to see if it fits with the company's new low-carbon, sustainable business model," a spokesperson told the *Irish Independent*.

The firm revealed it has already planted trial crops of a number of other herbs including yarrow, plantain, marshmallow and vervain in an area of reclaimed bog, in the last two weeks.

Should the crops be successful, the company hopes to become a supplier to the health food and pharmaceutical sectors.

"The herbs themselves are species typically grown on peatland," the spokesperson said.

"The trials will test if they can be produced in a sustainable commercial way for supply to the pharma or broader health sectors," said a company spokesman.

A trial cannabis crop has not been planted, as the company would have to undergo an arduous licensing and regulatory process before it could grow a commercial crop.

However, pending the success of the initial herbs the company is believed to be pondering the opportunities of growing medicinal cannabis as part of its "Brown to Green Strategy".

Tas hospital pharmacy win

PHARMACISTS working at Royal Hobart Hospital have received a significant funding boost, with the Tasmanian Government announcing \$3.8 million for the redevelopment of the hospital's pharmacy.

Tasmanian Treasurer, Peter Gutwien, announced the measure alongside an additional \$352.6 million in hospital infrastructure upgrades.

Welcoming the funding for the redevelopment of the hospital's pharmacy, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) President, Peter Fowler, said it would increase the capacity for

hospital pharmacists to support chemotherapy & elective surgeries in the public health system.

"As a representative of hospital pharmacy, and as a Tasmanian, I welcome the \$3.8 million over two years toward the Royal Hobart Hospital pharmacy redevelopment, which will see the construction of a new sterile pharmaceutical production facility," he said.

"From the perspective of treatment safety and quality we commend the Tasmanian Government for this strong investment into this crucial aspect of cancer treatment, which will help ensure more chemotherapy services can be delivered in the public hospital system, which is important for equity of patient access," Fowler said.

"As custodians of a substantial proportion of PBS medicines, including cutting-edge chemotherapies for inpatients with cancer, it is appropriate to see commensurate investment in the facilities hospital pharmacists need to deliver these essential services."

TWC Qantas deal

TERRYWHITE Chemmart (TWC) has announced a new partnership with Qantas Frequent Flyer, allowing customers to earn Qantas Points on eligible pharmacy purchases.

From Jul members of the TWC REWARDS loyalty program will also have the choice of converting their REWARDS into Qantas Points.

GSK confirms vaccination shortages

GLAXOSMITHKLINE has announced that its Fluarix Tetra seasonal influenza immunisation is no longer available in the private market, with all stocks diverted to supply government programs.

"GSK has received urgent requests from governments for additional doses, particularly for the vaccination of children under five years of age," the company said.

"Consequently GSK has taken the decision to divert all of its remaining Fluarix Tetra vaccine doses to these important programs," it added.

GSK also advised of a shortage of its measles, mumps, rubella

and varicella combination vaccine Priorix Tetra through until Nov 2019, impacting its ability to supply the product to the National Immunisation Program.

The company's Priorix MMR vaccine is also in short supply for non-government customers due to demand from measles outbreak control programs in several states and territories.

Stocks are also low for rabies vaccine Rabipur along with hepatitis-containing vaccines Havrix and Twinrix, while GSK is also experiencing a "supply constraint" of its Ventolin 5mg nebulas due to high global demand.

Vit D supports DMT2

VITAMIN D supplementation may benefit glycaemic control in people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (DMT2) according to a systematic review in *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice* - [CLICK HERE](#).

Guild Update

Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance

THE submission period for Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) renewal applications closes on 14 June 2019.

Applications must be lodged by 14 June 2019 for the allowance year beginning 1 July 2019.

If the RPMA Certification Statement (renewal application) is not submitted within this timeframe then, in accordance with the RPMA Program Rules, RPMA payments may be delayed or ceased.

To complete an RPMA renewal application, log into the [Pharmacy Programs Administrator Portal](#), navigate to the RPMA program page for your pharmacy, and complete the required fields.

Instructions for completing these steps can be found in the [RPMA Portal User Guide](#).

Once submitted, the renewal application will display a status of "pending" until the RPMA Payment Matrix for 2019-20 is finalised by the Department of Health and your payment can be calculated.

If you have any questions about this process contact the Support Centre at support@ppaonline.com.au or call 1800 951 285.