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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Satisfaction high



THE NAB Health Insights Special Report (part one) released this week showed satisfaction with pharmacies remains high at 8.2 points (out of 10), albeit dipping from 8.5 points a year ago.

Pharmacists are still among the most commonly visited health practitioners, however, this has dropped down to 61%, from 70% in the previous year.

Noticeably, women visit pharmacies more than men (67% women vs 54% men).

During a time when cost of living pressures are impacting households, pharmacists came in as the second most affordable practitioner, at 7.6 points (out of 10), with public hospitals coming in at most affordable at 8.3 points.

Younger Australians (those aged 18-34) were more likely to switch their pharmacies (at 10%) than older Australians (4% for those aged 35-44 and 55-64 and 3% for those 45-54), said Dean Pearson (pictured), NAB's Head of Behaviour and Industry Economics.

Qld's new ownership bill

THE Queensland Government has introduced a Bill for a contemporary *Pharmacy Business Ownership Act* in Parliament (**PD Breaking News** yesterday).

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia branch President Chris Owen (pictured) said the legislation has been the culmination of many years of legislative consultation with its members and stakeholders.

"This legislation has been a long time coming, and we are pleased that the Palaszczuk Government has committed to legislating a pharmacy regulatory council and bringing Queensland in line with other states and territories.

"We will now take the time to review the Bill in further detail and look forward to working with the Queensland Government on further progressing it in the new year," Owen added.

Since 2018, when the *Inquiry Report* into the establishment of a pharmacy council and transfer of pharmacy ownership in Queensland was tabled, the Guild stated it has worked closely with the Queensland Government to ensure they remain committed to



following this important legislation for pharmacy business ownership.

"Through our ongoing relationship with the Queensland Government, we will continue to dedicate our profession to providing safe, affordable and accessible healthcare for all Queenslanders.

"This legislation is important for the Queensland community as it strengthens the integrity and transparency of the profession, ensuring patients can continue to rely on their local community pharmacists to access a wide range of healthcare services and medicines," Owen concluded. *JG*

Potential contamination of saline products

THE TGA is alerting pharmacists that there are a number of *Ralstonia pickettii* cases in patients across multiple states and territories.

The national regulatory authority stated it is working closely with state and territory health departments to

investigate the possible role of therapeutic goods.

On 24 Nov, the TGA stated it has taken the precautionary measure of initiating a nationwide quarantine for some Interpharma saline products to minimise possible risk to Australian patients.

SILK sale done

WESFARMERS' wholly-owned subsidiary, Australian Pharmaceutical Industries, on Wed announced the completed acquisition of SILK Lasers, which will be folded into the Wesfarmers Health division (**PD 20 Apr**).

Shareholders of SILK were paid \$3.35 per share (\$3.25 under the scheme consideration, plus a 10c per share special dividend), a rise from the \$3.15 per share offer Wesfarmers made in Apr, *The Australian* has reported.

The revised offer values the company at about \$180m with SILK last trading at \$3.34.

Hong Kong-listed EC Healthcare was reported to have made a bid similar to Wesfarmers' accepted bid in May of this year.

SILK has more than 140 clinics across Australia and New Zealand and offers cosmetic services such as laser hair removal, fat reduction and cosmetic injections.

Wesfarmers Health Managing Director Emily Amos said, "through this acquisition, we are looking to build a leading medical aesthetics operator in Australia and New Zealand".

"We see strong operational and cultural alignment between our businesses and look forward to working with the SILK team and SILK's joint venture and franchisee partners to support their customers and deliver continued growth."

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Dispensary Corner

EXPERIENCING headaches?

Perhaps you should check whether there are some chopsticks embedded in your brain after the unusual case of a 35-year-old Vietnamese man whose doctors concluded that his five months of severe head pain were probably related to the eating implements they found inside his head.

The man sought help at the Cuba Friendship Hospital in Dong Hoi, and after a CT scan (pictured), the medicos diagnosed *pneumocephalus* or high intracranial pressure.

Case notes reported by Vietnam's *Dantri* newspaper confirm it was caused by a pair of broken chopsticks, which had been shoved up his nose and pierced the cranial cavity.

He doesn't recall how they got there but does remember being involved in a fight earlier whilst in a heavily intoxicated state which saw him end up in the emergency room.

"Doctors patched him up and sent him on his way without anyone realising the chopsticks were stuck up his nose.

All's well that ends well, with endoscopic surgery successfully undertaken to remove the foreign object.



Streamline vaccine access

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is again calling for vaccines to be made accessible to more Australians by fully utilising pharmacists as part of the immunisation workforce, following a new report from the Australian think tank Grattan Institute.

The Grattan Institute's report *A fair shot: How to close the vaccination gap* specifically recommends action on a National Vaccines Partnership Agreement and harmonisation of the state-based regulations that determine pharmacists' authority to deliver certain vaccines.

The report calls for new funding for Primary Health Networks to support general practice, pharmacists and aged care providers to promote vaccination in mainstream primary care.

PSA National President Dr Fei Sim welcomed the Grattan Institute's recommendations, which echo PSA's calls for nationally consistent vaccination authorities.

"The Grattan Institute's report is a stark look at how far we still have to go to make vaccination equitable for all Australians," said Sim.

"We know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to improving



vaccine uptake, with the report rightly highlighting the need for a tailored approach to ensuring vulnerable cohorts don't fall through the cracks".

The Federal Govt's move to open up National Immunisation Program funding for pharmacist-administered vaccines is a welcome first step, but Sim added there is more work to be done to allow pharmacists to deliver all vaccines to patients of all ages.

"At the moment, every jurisdiction in Australia has different regulations around which vaccinations can be administered by pharmacists."

"A nationally consistent schedule of pharmacist-administered vaccines is key to achieving equitable access to govt-funded vaccines by all Australians," Sim concluded - see the report [HERE](#). JG

Pharmacy packs wrong webster packs

A PHARMACY blunder saw one woman's mother overdose on her medication, resulting in the need for round-the-clock care after it "nearly killed her", *Yahoo News* has reported.

Lisa Carratelli said her mother Maria was prescribed methotrexate for treating her rheumatoid arthritis.

The Maroondah Hospital, Vic, where Maria presented started questioning her medication and

called the dispensing pharmacist.

"She was to take two [tablets] once a week, but the pharmacy had packed the webster packs with two tablets daily, that's seven times the prescribed amount," Carratelli said.

A discharge document from Box Hill Hospital, where Maria was later sent, suggested the 87-year-old was suffering from "methotrexate toxicity resulting in mucositis with pancytopenia".

Call for free meds

ON WORLD Aids Day, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia is urging all govts to do what they can to end the transmission of HIV by 2030.

Pharmacy Guild National President Trent Twomey said barriers must be reduced to accessing and paying for medicines which will lead to the elimination of HIV.

"Today's report by Health Equity Matters marks a watershed moment in our battle to eliminate HIV from our communities once and for all," remarked Twomey.

"We believe Australia can be the first country in the world to eliminate HIV transmission.

"To do this all HIV patients across the country should have treatment medicines provided free of charge, as they do in NSW and Qld.

"The prevention pill PrEP should also be made available without a prescription and be free of charge if we are serious about our mission to eliminate HIV," he explained.

"Pharmacists want to do our part on this journey to eliminating HIV by reducing the barriers for patients."

He said all govts should not lose sight of what's at stake.

"Just imagine, Australia could be on the path to be the first country to eliminate the transmission of HIV.

"What an amazing achievement that would be."



Pharmacy Daily
www.pharmacydaily.com.au

Pharmacy Daily is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Pharmacy Daily is Australia's favourite pharmacy industry publication.

EDITORIAL
Editor - Jayamala Gupte
Journalists - Adam Bishop, Myles Stedman, Janie Medbury, Matthew Wai
Publisher - Bruce Piper
Editorial Director - Damian Francis
Associate Publisher - Anna Piper
info@pharmacydaily.com.au

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING
Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan
Advertising Operations - Nicki Harford
advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

ACCOUNTS
accounts@traveldaily.com.au

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Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710
Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

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