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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus a cover wrap from TerryWhite Chemmart.

TerryWhite wraps

TERRYWHITE Chemmart has welcomed more than 40 Network Partners in 2023 - just one of many milestones the pharmacy brand reached over the last year.

To discover more, head to the [cover page](#).

PSA welcomes climate strategy

THE Pharmaceutical Society (PSA) of Australia has issued a statement welcoming the government's National Health and Climate strategy, announced earlier this week (PD 06 Dec).

The society's National President Dr Fei Sim thanked Federal Health Minister Mark Butler and Assistant Minister for Health Ged Kearney for their leadership in recognising the impact that climate change has on health.

"Climate change is already having a significant and direct impact not only on the health of every person in Australia, but also on the way we deliver quality health care," she explained.

Sim also highlighted the urgent need to "proactively respond and prepare" for the changing climate by implementing environmentally sustainable practices across the pharmacy and health network.

Guild warns of Sigma and CW merger

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has stated that the imminent merger of Sigma Healthcare and Chemist Warehouse "poses significant questions and risks" in a statement released Thu night.

Yesterday it was widely reported, including in this publication (PD 07 Dec), that a deal was being worked on which would see Sigma and Chemist Warehouse merge, with the latter finally listed on the ASX after previous float rumours.

This morning, Sigma Healthcare announced the extension of the current trading halt on the ASX as the deal continued to be worked on.

According to the Guild statement, significant questions and risks revolve around "patient care, community pharmacy ownership, competition, and the future of CSO wholesaling, which Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments together with regulators, like the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), need



to urgently consider and address".

The Guild called into question the "increased corporatisation" in the community pharmacy sector and threw its support behind strengthening the community pharmacy ownership laws, citing NSW and Qld as good examples.

The Guild statement noted they were "not only strongly supported by the Guild but demonstrate that there is bipartisan support across the country to preserve patients' rights to access world-class healthcare in metropolitan,

regional, rural and remote Australia through the existing community pharmacy model".

The statement went on to suggest careful scrutiny was needed of the "complex business models for compliance with community pharmacy ownership laws - laws designed to ensure that only pharmacists own, operate and control community pharmacies [and] are in the best interest of patients".

It is expected that specific details of the reverse takeover will be announced on Mon. DF

Anne Ruston to present at APP2024

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia National President Trent Twomey has announced Senator Anne Ruston, Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care and Shadow Minister for Sport, as a presenter for the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP2024) on 14 Mar.

"Senator Ruston has been a vocal supporter of community pharmacy over the last year as it has faced the impact of 60-day dispensing," Twomey said.

"We are looking forward to Senator Ruston attending and presenting at APP2024 for the second time and hearing more



about her view on the progress made, with many Australian states expanding community pharmacists' scope within the country's primary healthcare system," he added.

See [HERE](#) for full details and to register for the conference.

febfast sign-ups

EARLY registrations are now open for the febfast challenge, the national fundraiser run by Youth Support Advocacy Service (YSAS).

Now in its 19th year, the fundraiser encourages Aussies to kick a vice to the curb in the month of Feb while raising money to help support young people facing addiction.

Campaign Manager Alex Harrison said signing up in advance helps set "febfasters" up for success as it gives them time to fully commit and mentally prepare to give up alcohol (or any vice) for the month - sign up [HERE](#).

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Dispensary Corner

WE HATE to be the bearer of bad news, but if you want better sleep, you may need to give up sweet treats before bedtime - especially if stress is impacting your ability to snooze soundly.

New research from MyFitnessPal shows 60% of Aussies believe their sleep is negatively affected by stress, and 31% turn to sugary or high-fat snacks when under pressure.

Those who indulge their sweet tooth late at night, even just once a week, were more likely to report their sleep quality had worsened over the past year (40% vs 20% average).

Despite nine in 10 saying they know sugar isn't the solution when feeling frazzled, nearly a third admit to upping their intake when stressed, with women the most likely to opt for sugary, processed foods.

Sleep nutrition expert Oliva Arezzolo said foods that are high in sugar and fat can wreak havoc on our sleep as they are harder to digest and keep us alert... talk about not-so-sweet dreams.

CAPS calls upon doctors

THE Community and Pharmacy Support Group (CAPS) has penned a letter this week calling upon doctors to reject the 60-day dispensing policy, which it says is negatively impacting vulnerable patients.

"We feel a compelling need to unite as healthcare professionals," the letter stated.

"Pharmacists and doctors share a common goal - to create the best outcomes for our patients while safeguarding the healthcare industry's foundation."

The document goes on to highlight the "serious adverse effects" of the 60DD policy on patient care by detailing a case study of a retired elderly couple in Parramatta, and their pharmacist Jalal Chami.

The case study demonstrates the "unforeseen challenges" the policy creates for patients with extensive medication needs, as well as the increased financial pressure it places on pharmacies.

"If our most vulnerable patients are not only not seeing any benefits from this, but are actually negatively impacted, then this is clearly something that we as healthcare providers need to step up and speak out against," CAPS implored.



"We urge you to reconsider implementing 60-day prescriptions, as they are not only forcing pharmacists to close their doors, cut staff, and reduce free services, but are also impacting the health and financial situations of our vulnerable patients."

"We ask you to join us to voice our concerns and take actions to contribute to a collective effort that shapes policies in the best interest of those who depend on us.

"We call upon you to reject 60-day dispensing, and help us advocate for policies that will truly make a difference for the future of our nation," the letter concluded.

It's not the first time CAPS has called on GPs to take a stance against the controversial policy - in Oct, it asked them to "be mindful" when prescribing 60-day prescriptions (*PD 17 Oct*). *JM*


SHPA welcomes \$1.2b funding

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed new healthcare funding announcements from the government, which will see another \$1.2 billion to strengthen Medicare and support the delivery of more urgent care clinics.

However, pharmacists need to be able to work to their full scope of practice if the efficiency of the healthcare system is to be improved, SHPA President Tom Simpson said.

He said he was also pleased the Prime Minister is talking about implementing hospital avoidance programs for older Aussies, pointing out that half of the 250,000 medication-related hospital admissions each year were preventable.

Medication management programs for older Australians in primary care should be a key strategy, Simpson argued, as well as expanding pharmacist-led prescribing practices on discharge needs in Australian hospitals, in order to discharge patients earlier.


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Supplement demand soars Down Under

AUSTRALIA is seeing a significant surge in demand for health supplements, with recent research from the CSIRO projecting demand will reach \$5.2 billion by 2030.

An increasing number of Australians are seeking out vitamins, minerals, herbal and protein-based products due to an ageing population, rising health concerns and a shift

towards preventative healthcare, according to EZZ Life Science.

The challenge of maintaining a balanced diet as busy lifestyles become the norm, the trend toward natural and organic products, the influence of TikTok health trends, and the continuous impact of COVID-19, are all thought to be factors that are contributing to the booming health and wellness market.

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