



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from TerryWhite Chemmart.

Dedicated care

TERRYWHITE Chemmart is dedicated to supporting pharmacists' practice to the top of scope with its programs - see more on the **back page**.

Save a trip to GP

THE Australian Medical Association is again urging the Federal Parliament to support its campaign to increase the maximum dispensed quantities of selected PBS items from one month's supply to two months' supply per dispensing.

This would also allow up to 12 months' supply in total from a single script, saving patients a trip to the doctor.

Tackling 12-day trek for Starlight kids

WIZARD Pharmacy Chief Operating Officer Sally Parker and her husband, Nick Parker, are set to take on the 12-day Camino de Santiago trek to raise money for the Starlight Children's Foundation.

The trek, which was initially planned for 2020 but postponed to May due to the pandemic, will see the couple start in Porto, Portugal and travel 246.6km to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

With this fundraiser, Wizard Pharmacy is on track to reach its donation milestone of \$500k this year, which is the 13th year of partnership with the foundation.

Sally Parker spoke about the cultural experience and the personal challenge the trek presented as the reasons for her and her husband doing the walk.

"I'm looking forward to this opportunity to push ourselves outside our comfort zones, test our limits and hopefully discover more about ourselves and what we are physically and mentally capable of."



"We're also excited to immerse ourselves in the culture and learn more about the history of each town we shall pass through and the historical medieval pilgrimage as a whole," she said.

"To have this incredible experience, all the while raising money for such a worthy cause, truly makes this a milestone moment in my life."

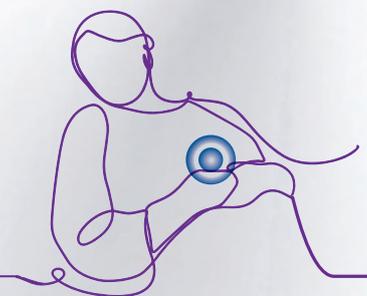
The Starlight Children's Foundation State Partnership Manager WA/NT, Cath Petsos, wished them luck and hoped it would be an incredible experience.

"We're extending enormous appreciation for their efforts to raise funds for Starlight toward making a difference to sick children and young people together."

"We trust they'll find plenty of their own moments of positive distraction along the way just as our own Captain Starlights provide positive distraction for the kids in hospital - we're right behind you!" Petsos said.

Pictured: Sally Parker and Nick Parker (centre) with Captain Starlights at the Perth Children's Hospital Starlight Express Room.

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Sigma sells CHS to CH2

SIGMA Healthcare Limited has today announced a deal for the sale of “certain hospital operations and assets” of its subsidiary, Central Healthcare Services Limited (CHS).

Under the terms of the agreement, Sigma will sell the intellectual property relating to the CHS trademark and logo, Sigma’s hospital services and designated hospital inventory to Clifford Hallam Healthcare Limited (CH2).

The actual CHS entity is retained by Sigma, and will be renamed Sigma Healthcare Logistics Pty Ltd, for ongoing operations in relation to third party logistics and other services, the company said.

Sigma CEO Vikesh Ramsunder said the sale was in line with the company’s strategy announced in Sep 2022.

“This disposal exits a very low margin sector, simplifies our business, releases working capital and allows us to focus on building scale in our core pharmacy wholesale and third party logistics operations,” Ramsunder said.

The deal is expected to be finalised on 31 Mar.

Female-founded startups

THE University of Melbourne will provide pre-seed investment to support two female-founded healthcare startups - at-home pregnancy monitoring startup Kali Healthcare, and clinical trial participant recruitment startup Torch Recruit, *BioSpectrum* has reported.

Kali Healthcare, co-founded by the University of Melbourne A/Prof Fiona Brownfoot, has developed a small wearable device and sensor patch that accurately picks up the baby’s heart rate, improving the ease and access to pregnancy monitoring for regional patients.

Tragically, over 2,000 Australian families are impacted by stillbirth each year, claiming the lives of one in every 130 pregnancies.

Kali Healthcare’s other co-founders Dr Emerson Keenan and Prof Marimuthu Palaniswami said that with a \$500k pre-seed investment from the University of Melbourne and ongoing support from development partners,



the fetal heart rate monitoring technology will be into the pivotal clinical trial phase by next year.

The second startup, a new clinical tool to help doctors automatically identify eligible patients for clinical trials and improve clinical trial participant diversity has been created by Torch Recruit, founded by the University of Melbourne A/Prof Jo-Anne Manski-Nankervis.

Western Health and the University have committed \$250k each in pre-seed investment funding for business development and expansion of the network of general practices working with Torch Recruit.

TGA fines \$159k plus for GMP breaches

THE TGA has issued 12 infringement notices totalling \$159,840 to Contract Manufacturing & Packaging Services Pty Ltd, a manufacturer of listed complementary medicines, for allegedly breaching conditions of its manufacturing licence, recently.

An inspection of the company’s premises identified unacceptable manufacturing practices.

It is alleged that in contravention of the conditions of its manufacturing licence, the company retested products without taking steps to determine the root cause of failures.

Repeating testing reduces

confidence in the company’s ability to ensure that their medicines comply with TGA specifications.

TGA inspectors identified this as a systemic problem that goes against globally accepted Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

The TGA is working closely with the company to develop and implement effective preventative measures to address the GMP failures.

The infringement notices are in response to past breaches and manufacturing can continue.

No disruption to the supply of their products is expected because of this action, TGA said.

Anti-ageing tests

AUSTRALIAN genomic life science company EZZ Life Science yesterday announced its contract with the University of Auckland to conduct research on anti-ageing and immune-stimulation products.

Going forward EZZ will build on previous research and test the anti-ageing effect of nicotinamide mononucleotide on human cells that line the inside of blood vessels.

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Allowances at risk

THE Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF), has revealed that some aged-care providers are not only refusing to pass on Government funding for long-overdue wage increases for their overwhelmingly female workforce, but are now threatening to cancel their Enterprise Agreements.

Providers must pass on taxpayer-funding in pay rises, ANMF said.



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Dispensary Corner

THE idea of opening a “topless cannabis dispensary” was proposed in Whately, Massachusetts, US, last week.

During the Whately Select Board meeting held last month, owners Nicholas Spagnola and Julius Sokol spoke about possible plans for the property called Club Castaway.

Spagnola told the Select Board that they had to close Club Castaway due to the coronavirus pandemic, and plan to reopen the strip club at some point and transition it to a marijuana dispensary.

“Our goal would be to operate a topless dispensary and to remove nude dancing and alcohol from the licence,” Nicholas Spagnola said.

When questioned who was going to be topless by a Select Board member, Spagnola replied: “Who’s going to be topless?”

“It may surprise you but we’ve never had a shortage of employees who want to work at Castaways.

“I do think, some of them would still love to be involved.”

Unlocking benefits of new CKD drugs

FOR the first time in 20 years, two new classes of drugs have become available in Australia for the treatment of diabetic kidney disease, the most common cause of kidney failure.

Both are “extremely effective, safe, and relatively affordable, however, too few people with kidney disease are using these breakthrough drugs”, said Prof Vlado Perkovic, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health, UNSW Sydney, who was involved in developing these drugs, along with other Australian researchers who have led the way in identifying their benefits.

“We can only unlock these benefits if healthcare professionals like pharmacists, patients, and the broader community have a greater awareness of kidney disease, and the tools we have to fight it,” Perkovic said.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a gradual loss of the kidney’s ability to filter waste and excess fluid from the blood.

“It’s quite insidious,” said Perkovic.

“In Australia, kidney disease affects an estimated one in 10 people, but most won’t be aware they have it until it is quite



advanced, and at the point of diagnosis, many people are at risk of progressing to kidney failure.”

So what is needed is to prevent people with kidney disease from developing kidney failure, he said.

In the 90s, blood pressure-lowering drugs, especially ACE inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers were started.

These helped, but only lowered the risk of kidney failure by about 20%, Perkovic explained.

Then for over 20 years, there were a huge number of clinical trials for different treatments trying to produce additional benefits, all of which were unsuccessful.

In the last few years, everything has changed, Perkovic said.

“We have two new classes

of drugs, SGLT2 inhibitors, and finerenone.

“The SGLT2 inhibitors are probably the single most effective treatment we have, reducing the risk of kidney failure by 30-40%.

“They have an array of additional benefits, including reducing the risk of heart failure and stroke, lowering blood pressure, and reducing weight.

“And they’re remarkably simple to take, just a once-daily tablet,” he said.

SGLT2 inhibitors are available in Australia, and they cost the government about \$50 per month per person, but they cost the individual less as they are reimbursed through the PBS.

Another medication called finerenone is also approved in Australia and may soon be covered by the PBS, and there is a wide pipeline of other potentially kidney-protective drugs currently being tested, Perkovic said.

“We’re at the beginning of a new era,” he stated.

“We’ve spent decades trying to find effective treatments, and finally we’ve got them.

“Now, the challenge is getting the treatments to the people that need them,” Perkovic concluded.

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