



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features five pages of news.

RPTA payments

THE Regional Pharmacy Transition Allowance (RPTA) has commenced on 01 Sep, with registration available via the PPA Portal in Oct (PD 01 Sep).

The first payments will also be made next month.

Payments will be paid a month in arrears.

Pharmacies will not be entitled to claim for months where they weren't registered for the program, for example, a pharmacy that registers in Jan 2024 will not be eligible to claim payments for Sep to Dec.

The temporary payments will support pharmacies in the Modified Monash Model 2-7 locations in Australia as they transition their businesses to take into account 60DD.

Learn more [HERE](#).

Masterclass in handling 60DD changes

THERE was a fresh sense of urgency among pharmacy owners at Pharmacy Connect's recent Pharmacy Ownership Masterclass, according to presenter Kian Ghahramani, the national pharmacy lead for RSM Australia.

Ghahramani explained that the urgency stems from the changes to come with the 01 Sep start date of the 60-Day Dispensing (60DD) policy.

"Whether the new dispensing rules remain as is, or are modified, we felt it was important for the workshop to focus on identifying opportunities for pharmacy owners," Ghahramani shared.

Looking for ways to improve performance was vital not just for 60DD, but to combat inflation and interest rates challenges and staffing issues, he said.

The Pharmacy Ownership Masterclass, sponsored by CommBank Health, saw attendees hear from subject matter experts at RSM Australia, CommBank Health and Scrypt.

During the session on purchasing a pharmacy, CommBank noted that rising interest rates was a factor that impacted risk assessment and borrowing power for pharmacies.

"It's critical that you know what the impact of 60DD will be on any pharmacy you are looking to purchase," Ghahramani said.

"On top of that, aspiring owners should not ignore the fundamental items such as lease details, financial metrics and the pharmacy offering when making their decision to purchase a pharmacy."

Scrypt spoke on the use of data to turbo-charge pharmacies' performance, highlighting the importance of having clean data and analytical tools to improve script retention and loyalty.

It also outlined that the average Australian pharmacy has 30-40% script loyalty so there is plenty of opportunity for growth.

"Tools such as Scrypt are great at identifying trends in your data and making decisions to improve your

script loyalty," Ghahramani said.

"Customers who are considered frequent flyers (high loyalty rate) bring tremendous value to a pharmacy and owners should look to working with these tools to convert those with low loyalty into frequent flyers," he added.

The masterclass concluded with RSM talking about key indicators in performance to drive financial outcomes, with pharmacy owners advised to implement metrics around staffing, inventory management and service offering.

"The KPIs, once in place, should be used to set annual targets, and budgets to claw back the value lost, or add value to the pharmacy.

"Pharmacies are in an enviable position as they hold so much data and we emphasise how important it is for owners to understand how to utilise, translate and keep this data up to date, to make timely decisions to correct any issues before they have too great an impact," Ghahramani concluded. JG



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Call for same payroll tax exemptions

ACT'S Capital Chemist pharmacist-owner Andrew Topp (pictured right) said if doctors are granted a payroll tax exemption by the government, pharmacists too should get the same treatment, *The Canberra Times* has reported.

Topp was quoted as saying all healthcare professionals should be subject to the same tax rules.

"If they're going to make an exemption for doctors, could we have it for every healthcare professional, please?"

"We [pharmacists] see more people than doctors do, that's for sure," he recently told the publication.

"The question of an exemption for one set of healthcare professionals becomes unfair."

Topp said most of the pharmacists at Capital Chemist were employed directly, but they sometimes had locums employed on contracts.

"[My understanding is that the] short-term contract is captured under the payroll tax umbrella, and is then declared as part of the



income," Topp explained.

"So pharmacies have been paying this tax according to those rules for decades," he added.

If pharmacists were exempt from payroll tax, services and medications would be cheaper, he explained.

"It can be a significant amount of money, and that becomes a business expense that needs to be passed on to consumers.

"That means higher prices or reduced services," he added.

"Those pharmacies paying payroll taxes have to recoup that directly or indirectly from their patients.

"So finding a way to give payroll tax exemptions, would then flow through to patients as savings," he commented.

Topp agreed with the doctor lobby groups that imposing the payroll tax on GP clinics was "not fair" and "a bit illogical" as the gov't is providing "billions in subsidies to encourage bulk billing, but then taxing doctors retrospectively". JG

Two at once works

HAVING a flu shot at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine does not appear to impact the immune response prompted by either, according to new research published in the *JAMA Network Open*.

The team compared groups of healthcare workers who received a flu vaccine, the Pfizer BA.4/BA.5 bivalent COVID-19 vaccine or both at the same time by giving them a questionnaire about their post-vaccine symptoms, and testing the antibody responses in their blood.

The researchers found that there appeared to be no significant difference in the participants' responses to the vaccines, both with post-vaccine symptoms and their immune responses, which they say supports the idea of getting both vaccines at once.

To learn more about the study, [CLICK HERE](#).

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HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ONLY

Design impacts

THE International Pharmaceutical Federation has an online event tomorrow where experts will discuss a community pharmacy's spatial requirements and design as a "crucial intersection of accessibility, functionality and the enablement of a range of professional services in the field of pharmacy".

This topic brings together pharmacists, architects, designers, and experts in the healthcare industry to delve into the spatial considerations that can impact pharmacy practice, patient interactions, and architectural aspects, and contribute to the optimal functioning and customer experience at community pharmacies.

Register for the *Designing pharmacies towards an accessible, patient-centred and service-oriented model of practice* webinar, [HERE](#).

Activating pharmacists in GP-led trial

IN AUSTRALIA, an estimated 400,000 emergency presentations and 250,000 hospital admissions are related to potentially preventable medication-related problems each year, at a cost to the healthcare system of more than \$1.4 billion.

Researchers at the University of Queensland have developed a new approach to reducing medication-related problems in primary care.

Published last week in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, the aim of the ACTMed (ACTivating primary care for MEDicine safety) trial, [HERE](#), the first of this type of intervention in Australia, of a general practice-based intervention for reducing the risk of serious medication-related problems.

The trial will also look at the impact on healthcare costs, healthcare efficiency and coordination, and patients' experience of care.

ACTMed uses information technology and financial incentives to encourage pharmacists to work more

closely with general practitioners to reduce the risk of harm, improve patients' experience of care, streamline workflows, and increase the efficiency of medical care.

The study protocol outlines a stepped wedge cluster randomised trial in 42 Queensland primary care practices that will assess the effectiveness of the ACTMed intervention aimed at improving medication safety and reducing adverse events.

The trial is being conducted in two phases, with the pilot phase completed and the main trial already underway.

The primary outcome will be the proportion of people at risk of serious medication-related problems - patients with atrial fibrillation, heart failure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - who experience such problems.

The trial will be supported by a data safety monitoring

board, which will be responsible for monitoring patient safety throughout the trial.

The trial will also be registered with the Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry, to ensure that the study is conducted in accordance with established ethical guidelines.

The findings of the trial will be distributed through a comprehensive dissemination plan, which will be developed by the research team, the steering committee, the consumer advisory group, project partners, and representatives from some participating practices.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will be supported in designing and leading meaningful community-level communication in formats of their choice, say the researchers.

The study is expected to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of a digital strategy for reducing medication-related problems in primary care. *JG*

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BMS drugs growth

THE latest results from a Phase II study highlight the potential of an all-oral combination therapy, featuring Bristol Myers Squibb's (BMS) cereblon E3 ubiquitin ligase modulator (CELMoD) mezigdomide and dexamethasone in treating triple-class-refractory multiple myeloma (MM).

Consequently, the sales of mezigdomide and iberdomide are expected to increase significantly, amid the shifting dynamics within the MM treatment market, forecasted GlobalData, an international data and analytics company.

According to GlobalData, the sales for mezigdomide and iberdomide are predicted to reach US\$125m (A\$195.7m) and US\$389m (A\$609m), respectively.

With Revlimid recently going off patent and sales expected to plummet, BMS hopes these therapies could take their place, but there is plenty of competition in the refractory MM space, GlobalData has reported.

Analyst at GlobalData Israel Stern said, "CELMoDs, including iberdomide, are more potent than the immunomodulatory drugs (IMiDs) Revlimid and Pomalyst, traditionally used in earlier lines of MM therapy".

"Mezigdomide is suited for patient's refractory to the IMiDs, many of whom also received prior therapies."

Suicide prevention plan



WORLD Suicide Prevention Day's (10 Sep) theme of 'Creating Hope Through Action' is a reminder that there are steps that can be taken that may provide hope to those who are feeling overwhelmed.

In line with this theme, the National Suicide Prevention Office (NSPO) is currently developing a National Suicide Prevention Strategy which will outline what can be done to reduce the number of suicides and suicide attempts in Australia.

Informed by people with lived and living experience, evidence, and best-practice suicide prevention initiatives, the strategy aims to extend the current efforts, which largely focus on preventing people who are in crisis from taking their own lives, NSPO stated.

It includes efforts that prevent people from reaching the point of suicidal distress in the first place.

Head of the NSPO, Dr Michael Gardner said, "suicide is not just an expression of mental illness, but of the challenges that people deal with every day".

"These are as diverse as financial stress, homelessness, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence,

social exclusion, loneliness and addiction," Gardner explained.

"The strategy outlines what can be done to address the factors that lead to suicidal distress.

"It seeks to bolster national wellbeing and ensure that people are not trapped in circumstances that lead to helplessness and hopelessness but have equal opportunity to thrive," he added.

"But it also aims to ensure that people who are struggling get help as early as possible, have access to effective and compassionate care, and receive support that does not end when moments of crisis pass."

Gardner said that preventing suicide is everybody's responsibility and requires significant collective national effort.

"At its heart, this strategy will ask Australians for a generosity of spirit; it will ask that governments, agencies, services, communities, and individuals recognise their role in suicide prevention; and work together to achieve change.

"There is a clear way forward and, while implementing the actions set out in the strategy will take time and commitment, there is no doubt it will save lives," Gardner said. *JG*

Stop head trauma

FINALS season is a good time to reflect on how sports-related concussions and the associated long-term disability can be prevented so more people keep playing, Australia's peak body for public health stated.

Reducing damage to the brains of current and future generations of aspiring sporting stars will help families encourage children to play healthy, active sports for longer, the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) said, following the tabling last week of a Senate inquiry into concussions and repeated head trauma in contact sports.

"While the focus might be on the impact on high profile contact sport heroes under pressure to stay on the field for their team's glory, those cases are the tip of the iceberg," said PHAA CEO, Adj/Prof Terry Slevin.

"Changing how professional sport is played and managed, with a focus on preventing concussion, will flow down to the grassroots.

"With over 500k registered AFL players, 276k rugby league players and 230k rugby union players, and more women playing such codes, contact sport is on the rise.

"So too may be the prospect of greater long-term damage due to concussion," Slevin said.

"Therefore it's imperative to ensure the best preventive interventions are in place to ensure fewer people get hurt."

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Dispensary Corner

BABIES in polluted areas are apparently getting smaller, with research presented this week at the European Respiratory Society International Congress finding a correlation between the “greenness” of a woman’s location and baby birth weight.

A team from the University of Bergen in Norway used satellite images to measure the density of vegetation close to where 4,300 women lived during their pregnancies, while also linking the information to data on five key atmospheric pollutants.

The observational study found that higher levels of air pollution were linked with about 50g average lower birth weights, an impact which was mitigated for those who lived in greener areas.

The results suggest that pregnant women exposed to air pollution, even at relatively low levels, tend to give birth to smaller infants while living in a greener area seemed to counteract this effect.

“It could be that green areas tend to have lower traffic, or that plants help to clear the air of pollution, or green areas may mean it’s easier for pregnant women to be physically active,” the paper suggested.

There is a strong relationship between birth weight and long-term lung health involving conditions such as asthma and COPD, the researchers noted.



Mouth gel moves to S2



CHOLINE salicylate is an ingredient in a number of products for teething and the relief of pain, inflammation and discomfort associated with new dentures or braces and mouth ulcers and sores.

From 01 Oct, products containing choline salicylate for oromucosal or mouth use will only be available for purchase at pharmacies, the TGA has reported.

Customers may need to be informed that pharmacy medicines (Schedule 2 of the Poisons Standard) are those that may require advice from a pharmacist for safe use, and which should be available from a pharmacy or from a licensed person where a

pharmacy service is not available.

In making this decision, the risks associated with prolonged use and overuse of choline salicylate, especially in children, were considered by the TGA.

The Therapeutic Guidelines in Australia do not recommend teething gels (irrespective of choline salicylate content) because of the lack of evidence of efficacy and the potential for harm.

The change was made in response to an application to amend the Poisons Standard, which was received in Jul 2021.

See the final decision to amend the Poisons Standard in relation to choline salicylate, **HERE**. JG



Weekly Comment

Welcome to **Pharmacy Daily's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Mark Churchill**, Director - Banking & Investment, Kizmet Capital.



One day makes a difference...

IT'S scary to think the significance of what one day makes. Up until 31 Aug, if a pharmacy went into liquidation, it would have been attributed to poor performance/management or any one of many other factors that leads to financial hardship.

Then suddenly one day later, these same factors are quickly ignored and instantly become the fault of the 60-Day Dispensing (6oDD) policy.

While this may be a contributing factor, but using 6oDD as the excuse can have wider implications, such as banks seeing this as an industry issue, and not the individual operator who may choose to review lending policy leading to the tightening of Loan Value Ratios, which in turn reduces the availability of cash, which cascades to diminishing pharmacy values.

It can quickly turn and without warning, so it is imperative that you implement change, and if change isn't working, ask for help. We all have an interest to ensure the viability of our industry.

Learn more **HERE**.

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