



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Chemsave
- Metagenics

Vaccination survey

THE National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance and the University of Canberra are investigating the drivers of, and barriers to, pharmacist-administered vaccination services around the country.

As part of the research, pharmacists are asked to participate in a survey that has the goal of informing future policy that will affect pharmacy vaccination in Australia.

Privacy and confidentiality will be assured at all times for responses, said the study team.

To complete the short survey, [CLICK HERE](#).

ACCC pushes review date

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has pushed back the date it will reveal its findings on the proposed merger between Sigma Healthcare and Chemist Warehouse to 24 Oct (PD 11 Dec 2023).

The competition watchdog has expressed strong concerns that the merger could reduce competition in pharmacy retailing.

"This is a significant structural change for the pharmacy sector, with the largest pharmacy chain by revenue merging with a key wholesaler to thousands of independent pharmacies that compete against Chemist Warehouse (CW)," said ACCC Commissioner Stephen Ridgeway last month.

In its Statement of Issues (PD 13 Jun), the ACCC noted that, upon completion of the proposed acquisition, Chemist Warehouse shareholders would hold 85.75% of the ASX-listed merged entity, while Sigma shareholders would



hold 14.25%.

Australia has over 6,000 pharmacies, with the ACCC estimating that the five largest banner groups account for about 40-45% of stores.

Small-to-medium pharmacies, including Chempro Chemist, Blooms The Chemist, Direct Chemist Outlet, Pharmacy 777, and Ramsay Pharmacy, represent around 15-20% of stores, with the remaining 40% being independents.

Chemist Warehouse, with approximately 550 pharmacies, accounts for 9% of retail pharmacy stores and has the second-largest number of bannered pharmacies in Australia, behind only EBOS.

The ACCC suggests that assessing market share by revenue, rather than store count, may provide a more accurate picture, particularly when including online sales. JG

3G to close soon

TELSTRA and Optus will shut down their 3G networks at the end of Aug, affecting some medical devices and personal alarms for customers.

Devices using 3G will no longer be able to send texts, make calls, or contact triple-zero in emergencies.

Manufacturers and suppliers of 3G-dependent medical devices are urged to notify customers about the change, particularly those in rural areas or with language barriers.

Some 4G devices that rely on 3G for emergency calls will also be impacted by this change.

Chemsave savings

FOR a limited time only, Chemsave is offering a low monthly membership fee to pharmacy owners.

There are discounts on medicines, and with wholesalers - see [page three](#).



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1. Prospan is clinically proven to relieve a chesty cough in 7 days vs 14 days untreated. Schaefer A, et al., Pharmazie 2016;71(9):504-509. Lang C, et al., Planta Med 2015;81:968-974. Supported by Engelhard Arzneimittel GmbH & Co. KG.

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Dispensary Corner

IF THE International Olympic Committee is considering new sports in the future, they should pay a visit to Jenny Milner-Marsha Watson Pharmacy in rural Victoria.

In the spirit of the recent Games in Paris, the team hosted its own mini-Olympic Games, in its spare time, to conduct a series of fun events every few days and dressed up in sporting gear (pictured).

Cheered on by customers, the team held events in makeshift spaces in-store, including mini-golf and cricket.

Other events included plastic cup stacking, with participants required to build a pyramid and then neatly re-stack the cups.

Occasionally, events took place in the carpark, including a three-legged race and throwing plastic balls into buckets.

Undoubtedly the most creative "sport" involved a race to thread a slinky through the hole in the middle of a CD, with teams of two only allowed to use one hand to spin the disc along the stretched out slinky.

"We've done a lot of breakdancing in store over the last couple of days too," the pharmacy's Retail Manager, Paula Hales, told *PD*.



Cut the red tape for scope

AS THE state faces a shortage of GPs, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia is calling on the New South Wales Government to further extend pharmacists' ability to offer primary healthcare.

The call from the peak pharmacy body comes after the state's Minister for Health, Ryan Park, told media last week that NSW would face a shortfall of 1,000 GPs by 2028 (*PD* 08 Aug).

Speaking to *Pharmacy Daily*, the Guild's NSW branch President David Heffernan said, "we heard for years now that waiting times for appointments are getting longer and hospital wait times aren't acceptable".

"The GP shortage in the future, just adds more load on the system.

"We are saying that simple measures, not just for pharmacists, but for all other health professions, will enable us to practice to the full scope that we are trained to do."

He commented, "it all has to do with the legislation, where government should look at the

proposals, determine the safety aspect, change legislation on the regulations, and then get out of the way, and let us pursue our work".

The Guild is urging the NSW govt to authorise pharmacists to treat more health conditions, as seen in North Queensland.

"This would enable trained pharmacists to manage acute issues like nausea and chronic conditions like asthma and cardiovascular risk," Heffernan explained.

Research suggests these changes could save the NSW economy \$1.7bn and free up over 1.7m GP consultations per year. *JG*

Expand your scope

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New PBS listings for cancer patients

ADULTS with hereditary transthyretin-mediated amyloidosis and certain cancers will now have access to more affordable drugs under the PBS.

Several new treatments have been listed, including Koselugo (selumetinib) for children with neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), a rare genetic disorder affecting around 1 in 3,000 Australians.

The listing will benefit about 170 children annually, reducing treatment cost from \$146,000 to the PBS price.

Onpattro (patisiran), now listed to treat hereditary transthyretin-mediated amyloidosis, will benefit around 55 patients each year.

Without the PBS support, treatment would cost around \$647,500 annually.

Tecentriq SC (atezolizumab) has also been introduced in a new subcutaneous form for lung and liver cancer patients, allowing over 2,700 Australians to receive a quick injection instead of a lengthy intravenous infusion.

Without a PBS listing, the drug would cost \$120,000 per year.

Vitrakvi (larotrectinib) has been expanded to treat adults with specific gene fusion-related cancers, aiding around 10 patients per year, who otherwise would have had to pay \$300,000 per course of treatment.

Guild Update

Updated Standard for pharmacies

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has been busy over the last two years facilitating a collaborative process to update the AS 85000:2024 Australian Community Pharmacy Standard.

It was developed in consultation with 20 stakeholder organisations on the Standards Development Committee and Standards Reference Group.

Simon Blacker, Chair of the Guild's Clinical Governance Committee, highlighted the collaborative effort, saying, "the new Standard was designed by the profession, for the profession, ensuring it is fit for purpose now and into the future".

"Standards are the foundation of quality accreditation and play a fundamental role in clinical governance and lead to improved clinical outcomes, delivered more consistently, for all Australians," said Blacker.

The updated Standard aligns with the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards, introduced by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care in 2021, ensuring that community pharmacies adhere to best practices and deliver safe, high-quality care.

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