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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus a full page from **Pointrs**.

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Overdose aware

AHEAD of International Overdose Awareness Day tomorrow, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is highlighting new challenges faced by pharmacists, including the rise of nitazines around Australia.

PSA President Fei Sim stated the day "presents an opportunity for the community, healthcare professionals, policymakers and the media to continue raising awareness about the risks of opioid overdose, the emergence of new threats, such as nitazines, and the importance of harm reduction strategies".

"PSA encourages support for initiatives including the Take Home Naloxone program and the adoption of drug checking services, which are vital to efforts to save lives and reduce the impact of drug-related harm," Sim added.

MedAdvisor aces FY24

STRONG growth in Australia has helped MedAdvisor Solutions achieve robust results for FY24, with a revenue increase of 24.6% on the previous corresponding period to \$122.1 million.

The global pharmacy-driven company also saw its gross profit rise by 24.9% to \$74.2 million, while its EBITDA improved from a loss of \$3 million in FY23 to a profit of \$7 million.

In an update posted on the ASX yesterday, MedAdvisor said new and enhanced revenue streams in Australia - delivered through the growth of health programs and an improved fee structure - was a key driver behind the positive results.

"The past year has been a period of remarkable growth and transformation for MedAdvisor Solutions," said CEO & Managing Director, Rick Ratliff (**pictured**).

"We achieved significant growth in group revenue, driven by the strong performance of our businesses in both the United States and Australia/New Zealand, and delivered on our Pathway to Profitability, which we now intend to build upon."

MedAdvisor's revenue and gross profit in Australia and New Zealand rose by 19.1% and 24% respectively, reflecting the full impact of the GuildLink migration (**PD** 20 Mar 2023), as well as newly introduced fees.

"In Australia, we made significant strides realising the full-year benefit of subscription fee changes in FY23 and aligning new fee structures with the value created by our pharmacy customers," Ratliff commented.



The 2024 financial year also saw the company's pharma-sponsored awareness and adherence health programs grow in Australia and New Zealand to 65, across 47 brands (up by 10) and 27 manufacturers.

The MedAdvisor app was also upgraded with telehealth integrations, improved e-script ordering and biometric login, with patient reach and revenue expected to grow as a result of enhanced patient onboarding.

Looking to the future, MedAdvisor is targeting 20-25% CAGR and approximately \$250 million revenue for FY28, alongside EBITDA margins exceeding 20%, as part of its five-year strategic plan.

The roadmap will see the company launch its Transformation 360° initiative in FY25, which aims to propel its patient engagement capabilities and foster sustainable, profitable growth.

The initiative includes the organisation's new cloud-based platform, MedAdvisor for Pharmacy, which is currently being rolled out across Australian pharmacy clients to replace PlusOne (**PD** 24 Jul). *JM*

IV shortage fix

A GLOBAL shortage of IV fluids, driven by surging demand and manufacturing constraints, has prompted urgent action by the Commonwealth, states and territories.

To alleviate the shortage, the Federal Government has partnered with local producers and suppliers to secure over 22 million additional IV fluid bags over the next six months, surpassing forecast demand.

Baxter, a key manufacturer, is producing IV fluids at record levels at its Sydney site and plans to expand its local manufacturing capacity soon, reported the Federal Department of Health.

A cross-jurisdictional response group, including private hospitals and primary care representatives, has been formed to address the issue.

The group met this week and reported that the situation has stabilised in most areas but will continue to meet weekly, or more frequently if needed, while supply remains tight.

The TGA is also alerting staff to use IV stock judiciously, with service prioritisation decisions managed at the state and territory level.



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Dispensary Corner

AS THE 2024 Paralympic Games kick off, Bupa is going for gold... in wellness!

While the athletes are warming up, Bupa is scoring points by setting up a Wellness Hub (pictured below) in Paris for the 'team behind the team' - coaches, officials, and Paralympics Australia staff who help our paralympians shine.

Nestled near the Games venue, the Wellness Hub offers a place for these heroes to unwind and stretch out, literally.

With physios, massage chairs, recovery boots, and a stretch station, it's got everything for a quick refresh between the cheers and the stress.

Bupa's APAC CEO, Nick Stone, said the hub is all about supporting those who support our stars.

"We're pumped to cheer on our paralympians and equally proud to give their support teams a bit of love," said Stone.

"It's a green-and-gold fever dream over here," he quipped.

The hub follows a year of various Bupa-led health programs, from skin checks to sleep strategies designed with Paralympics Australia.

"We're inspired by the journey to Paris where while our athletes are going for medals, Bupa is making sure the cheerleaders stay in peak condition too," added Stone.



Enhertu gets PBS listing

AUSTRALIANS with a newly defined type of metastatic breast cancer, HER2-low, will now have access to a life-prolonging drug under the PBS from 01 Sep.

The expanded listing of Enhertu (trastuzumab deruxtecan) will offer a new treatment option for those with unresectable or metastatic breast cancer, which cannot be surgically removed or has spread to other parts of the body.

"While survival outcomes for patients with metastatic breast cancer have improved over the past 20 years, too many will still die prematurely due to the disease," commented Monash Health A/Prof, Michelle White.

"The listing of Enhertu is a significant step forward in the management of HER2-low metastatic breast cancer.

"This targeted treatment aims to stop the growth and progression of the disease and provides another effective option for eligible patients," added White.

The PBS expansion for the drug is expected to benefit around 1,700 Australians annually.

Without the subsidy, the cost of a course of Enhertu could exceed \$160,000, according to the



Department of Health.

With the PBS listing, eligible patients will pay a maximum of \$31.60 per script, or \$7.70 with a concession card.

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler reaffirmed the government's commitment, saying, "we are making medicines cheaper and more accessible, providing lifesaving options for those fighting this insidious disease".

The sentiment was supported by Vicki Durston, Director of Policy, Advocacy and Support Services at Breast Cancer Network Australia, who said, "Enhertu offers new hope to those with HER2-low metastatic breast cancer, providing an option that was previously unaffordable". JG

Superbug rates

RESEARCHERS from Flinders University and SAHMRI are urging more careful antibiotic management in aged care facilities to protect residents from antibiotic-resistant bacteria, or superbugs.

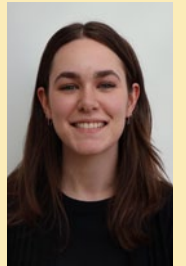
A study in the *Journal of Infection* links frequent antibiotic use in aged care to a rise in resistant bacteria in the gut, which can be transmitted between residents.

"High rates of antibiotic prescriptions are likely to be contributing to the proliferation of these bugs, which can lead to longer hospital stays, higher medical costs and increased mortality," said the study's lead author Sophie Miller (pictured below).

"The trend not only compromises the effectiveness of antibiotics but also poses a significant risk of treatment failures in an already vulnerable community."

The study analysed stool samples from 164 residents in five South Australian aged care facilities, finding that a commonly prescribed antibiotic was linked to increased resistance to other antibiotics the patients hadn't been given.

"These findings suggest even certain antibiotics not usually associated with resistance can escalate it," commented Miller, calling for caution in prescribing practices to prevent further spread of resistant infections - learn more **HERE**.



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