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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, including our **Beauty & Wellness** feature, plus full pages from:

- Chemsave
- Wizard Pharmacy
- Independent Pharmacies Australia

Consider savings

WHETHER it is catalogue pre-order rebates, dispensary assistance subscriptions or bonus stock, aligning your pharmacy with Chemsave delivers bottom-line benefits.

Discover how you can save big with a limited-time offer - see **page four**.

Sigma-CWH merger date



SIGMA has provided an update on its proposed merger with Chemist Warehouse, confirming that the parties have agreed to extend the end date of their proposed merger to 31 Mar 2025.

The main requirements to be finalised are the approval of certain resolutions in connection with the transaction by Sigma shareholders, the approval of the scheme by Chemist Warehouse shareholders, and court approval.

In an ASX statement, Sigma said it expects the documentation shareholders require to vote on the resolutions of the merger to be published this calendar year, and looks forward to providing shareholders with notice of the Extraordinary General Meeting in respect of the transaction.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) announced in Nov (*PD* 07 Nov) that it would not oppose the proposed \$8.8 billion merger between Sigma Healthcare Limited and Chemist Warehouse Group, contingent upon a court-enforceable undertaking provided by Sigma.

The undertaking mandates that Sigma delete the data of pharmacies that switch to another wholesaler or banner group and also continues as a participating wholesaler in the Commonwealth Government's Community Service Obligation for five years.

"The ACCC found that, with the undertaking, the proposed merger is unlikely to substantially lessen competition," said ACCC Chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb.

"There is and will continue to be effective competition at all levels of the pharmacy supply chain, capable of constraining a combined Sigma Chemist Warehouse."

Commenting on the announcement, Chemist Warehouse Group CEO Mario Verrocchi said, "We welcome the ACCC's decision."

"Chemist Warehouse has a history of driving innovation and competition, based on a high-volume, low-prices model.

"We believe that the combined group will continue to drive competition within the industry."

However, the mandate has not fully assuaged many pharmacists' concerns about the impact of the merger on their business, and in a submission to the ACCC's competition review, reported by the *Australian Financial Review*, the Pharmacy Guild labelled efforts by Chemist Warehouse to lessen the impact [of the merger] as "tokenistic". *KB*

Men's health site

A **NEW** online healthcare platform for men has launched ahead of time, released by Restorative Health Clinic, a partner of LTR Pharma.

The new site offers telehealth medical consultations by experts in treating erectile dysfunction; comprehensive therapeutic services; prescription and non-prescription treatments and integrated health management solutions provided by RHC's clinical team.

"We're thrilled to launch our online booking, consultation, and prescribing platform for men's health," said RHC's Melissa Hadley Barrett.

Work for Wizard

WIZARD Pharmacy is on the lookout for the best pharmacy leaders and emerging talent to build their careers within its network in Darwin.

Competitive salary packages are on offer to the right candidates - more on **page 5**.

Retail excellence

THE theme of Independent Pharmacies Australia's Retail Excellence Conference in Melbourne next year is "Lead, Connect and Grow".

IPA members can register now and get a special earlybird offer - see **page six** for more.

Medview

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PBS
Alcon

Editor's Choice: DB Sensations unveils a new summer sensation

AFFORDABLE Aussie beauty brand, DB Cosmetics, has launched a new product to get lips summer-ready.

The Who's The Gloss Hydrating Lip Tint (RRP \$14.99) is an SPF50+ lip gloss that combines bold pigmentation, high shine, and essential sun protection.

Infused with Aloe Vera and Vitamin E, the nourishing formula is designed to keep lips soft, conditioned, and looking glossy.

"Who's The Gloss is our most highly anticipated product launch of the year, and with good reason," explained Amanda Connors, DB Cosmetics Chief Marketing Officer.

"It rivals its luxury counterpart,

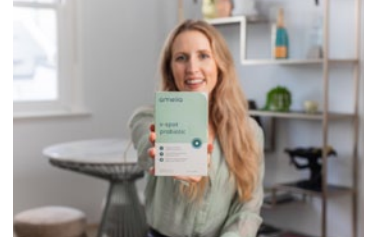


the Ultra Violette Sheen Screen, retaining the same amazing quality and sun-safe protection but without the hefty price tag."

Who's The Gloss is available for RRP \$14.99 from leading pharmacies and online.

DB Cosmetics is also launching the On The Double Dual-Ended Lip Liner in shades Sugar & Spice, inspired by the viral sensation from MAC Cosmetics - perfect to pair with the gloss for the ultimate summer look.

V-Spot hits the spot



AMELIA Bio, a female-founded Australian science start-up, has launched the country's first science-driven vaginal probiotic suppository, V-Spot.

Featuring the 'superhero' strain of *Lactobacillus crispatus*, the product works to help balance and restore the vaginal microbiome, helping to prevent bacterial vaginosis and yeast infections.

Working faster than oral probiotics for the vagina, the probiotic suppository delivers a full dose of healthy bacteria strains to the site of action, reducing treatment time to 5-10 days, from 30-60 days.

"The research, and translation of research into development into vaginal health has been woeful," said Amelia Bio Founder, Catherine Slogrove (pictured).

"The stigma and shame associated with talking about vaginal infections has kept women in perpetual discomfort with their pain downplayed - I know this because it happened to me too.

"With the launch of Amelia and our first complementary medicine, we hope to contribute positively to women's health and make it okay to talk about vaginas."

Amelia V-Spot is now available for \$39.95 from independent pharmacies and sexual health clinics around Australia.

Caruso's aids veins

CARUSO'S Veins Clear is a one-a-day tablet formulated to reduce and relieve the uncomfortable symptoms of mild varicose veins, such as aching and tired legs, pain, leg swelling, and itchy legs.

The supplement contains the herb horse chestnut, as well as butcher's broom, grape seed, hesperidin and vitamin C, which combine to help maintain the health of blood vessels.

The product is available in pharmacies around Australia, including Priceline, for RRP \$37.



Vegan moisturiser hydrates the whole family



AUSTRALIAN cosmetic, bath and body brand Empire is showcasing its Vegan Body Lotion (RRP \$19.95 for 500ml), designed to be used top to toe by the whole family.

With geranium and clary sage essential oils, as well as luscious shea butter, avocado oil and wheat germ oils for hydration, the moisturiser smells as good as it feels on parched skin.

Available in a handy pump pack at Healthylife Pharmacy locations around Australia and online, this lotion is perfect to help hydrate dry skin.

Other products in Empire's range include a Hand Balm Gift Boxed Trio (RRP \$29.95); Pure Hair Care Duo Shampoo & Conditioner 1 Litre Boxed Set (\$39.95); Geranium & Clary Sage Pure Hand Balm (RRP \$14.95).

Also available are the Geranium & Clary Sage Pure Body Wash (RRP \$19.95) and Geranium & Clary Sage Body Scrub (RRP \$19.95).

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Beauty & Wellness
by Pharmacy Daily

Dispensary Corner



BEING a little chill might be good for humans, but not necessarily great for fish.

Our lakes and rivers are rich with all sorts of medicines and other drugs that manage to survive sewage treatment processes, with potential effects on aquatic life.

The concern is that psychoactive pharmaceutical pollutants, such as antidepressants and anxiolytics, may act on the neural pathways of wildlife, affecting behaviour.

One such watery drug found in relative abundance is the anxiety and sleep medication temazepam.

Researchers subjected baby brown trout to levels of the drug similar to what can be found in the environment, tagged them and released them into a river.

They found that the fish exposed to the drug were less likely to successfully reach a lake downstream, most likely due to being eaten by predators.

So, being relaxed and sleepy was not beneficial.

It may also have been due to increased risk-taking behaviour, which has been observed in fish on benzos, another anxiolytic.

It does make you wonder about fish on psychoactive non-pharmaceutical drugs, such as the cocaine and ice blessing our waters - although if you think about it too much, you'll never go wild swimming again.

The findings show that "pharmaceutical pollution could negatively impact the health and persistence of wildlife", the researchers concluded.

Aussies living longer but not healthier

LIVING with overweight or obesity has overtaken tobacco smoking as the leading risk factor contributing to disease burden in 2024, according to a new report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The burden of disease study estimates years of health life lost because of injury, illness or premature death, and considers over 200 diseases and injuries.

It also provides estimates of how much of this disease burden can be attributed to 20 individual risk factors such as alcohol use, physical inactivity, poor diet, overweight or obesity, and tobacco smoking.

Tobacco smoking has long been the leading risk factor in burden of disease, linked with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer.

However, a drop in smoking prevalence has seen obesity and overweight emerge as the leading risk factors contributing to disease burden, accounting for 8.3% of total disease burden versus 7.6% for tobacco smoking.

"Australians lost an estimated 5.8 million years of healthy life due to living with disease and dying prematurely in 2024," said AIHW spokesperson Michelle Gourley.

"Over one-third of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia in 2024 could have been avoided or reduced due to modifiable risk factors included in the study," she said.

When looking at rates of total disease burden, there was a 10% decrease between 2003 and 2024, after adjusting for population ageing, driven by a 26% decrease in the rate of fatal burden.

However, the non-fatal burden rate increased by 7%.

"While Australians are living longer on average, years lived in ill health are also growing, resulting in little change in the proportion of life spent in full health," said Gourley, explaining that it contributes to the growing demand and pressures on the health system and services.

As with previous years, cancer was the leading group of diseases



causing burden, accounting for over 91% of fatal burden and almost 9% of non-fatal burden.

The leading specific causes of disease burden were coronary heart disease (5.5%), dementia (4.5%), back pain and problems (4.3%), anxiety disorders (3.9%) and COPD (3.7%).

Coronary heart disease was the leading cause of burden among males, and dementia was the leading cause among females.

Burden of disease information provides an important evidence base to inform health policy and service planning.

The full report is [HERE](#). KB

Digital tools for medication safety feature at symposium

DIGITAL healthcare tools are playing an increasing role in enabling healthcare providers to manage medications more safely and effectively, heard delegates at the National Medicines Symposium, held 19 Nov.

Michael Bakker, Chief Pharmacy Information Officer, SA Pharmacy, discussed some of the issues arising from fragmented healthcare systems and how digital tools can help bridge gaps.

Bakker, who is also a PhD candidate, described the AutoMedic project, a tool

that aims to create a more streamlined and accurate record of prescription medicine used by patients discharged from public hospitals in SA.

Funded by the Medical Research Future Fund to the tune of \$2.9 million, the tool can identify patients most at risk of adverse events due to medicine errors when in hospital and put GPs and pharmacies in a position to intervene and assist and even prevent such problems.

Alice Nugent, Pharmacist Advisor to National Aboriginal Community

Controlled Health Organisations, discussed some of the learnings from digital tools.

So-called digital disasters arose from delays setting up locums in practice software, pharmacies not having electronic scripts capability and patients running out of phone credit needed to manage tokens.

Also speaking at the symposium was Pharmaceutical Society of Australia President A/Prof Fei Sim, who discussed the role of pharmacists in aged care.

Recordings of the symposium are now available online [HERE](#).

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- Pharmacy managers
- Retail assistants (especially aspiring leaders)
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- Pharmacy owners

Program Highlights:

Day 1 Sunday 9 Feb

- Half-day conference sessions featuring keynote speakers Bri Williams and Brianne Shephard
- Welcome Function at Transit Bar Rooftop

Day 2 Monday 10 Feb

- Full-day of speed networking with sponsors
- Gala and Awards evening

Day 3 Tuesday 11 Feb

- Half-day conference sessions featuring keynote speaker Sam Wood

Inspirational speakers



Bri Williams
Behavioural Expert
and Founder & CEO
People Patterns



Brianne Shephard
Guild Pharmacy Assistant of the
Year 2019, Regional Manager
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Sam Wood
Personal Trainer
and Founder
28 By Sam Wood

[View full speaker line-up](#)

Retail Excellence Awards

Nominate yourself or a team member. Open to all team members and owners of IPA member pharmacies, our inaugural awards presented at the Conference will celebrate individuals in the following categories:

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-  **Making A Difference**
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