

4 ways to help build strong bones



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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of industry news, plus a full page from Dispense Assist.

## Dispensary help

DISPENSE Assist is a low-cost staffing solution with dispensary technicians available 24/7, at rates from as low as \$6.37 per hour, for services that include compounding, DAAs and any other required tasks - see p3.

## Insulin SSSI

NOVO Nordisk has advised the TGA that it will discontinue the Protaphane InnoLet human insulin (rys) 100 IU/mL injection multidose cartridge on 01 Feb 2025.

The TGA has created a Serious Scarcity Substitution Instrument (SSSI) that allows a pharmacist to dispense a Protaphane Penfill cartridge in its place without a new prescription, if the pharmacist considers it will be suitable for the patient - see more [HERE](#).

## Forged prescriptions alert

PROFESSIONAL indemnity insurer, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL), is warning pharmacists to look out for forged prescriptions being presented.

PDL said that despite the introduction of Real Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM), "some forged or fraudulently obtained prescriptions may still slip through the checking process".

PDL noted that falsified prescriptions often have multiple "red flags", such as being for S8 or S4 monitored medicines that may be subject to misuse or abuse; the patient or prescriber are from outside the local area; or the prescription has not been recorded on an RTPM system.

There may also be behavioural indicators, such as being overly friendly, or the patient or prescriber have called in advance to check if the medication is in stock.

Before acting on suspicious prescriptions, the insurer has stressed the need to prioritise safety of staff and other customers, and suggests making a copy of the script before interacting with the individual.

It recommends that pharmacists should contact the prescriber if



they have doubts over the validity of a script, and check recent communications from authorities and the RTPM system.

The insurer reminded pharmacists to be aware that "sophisticated forgeries often have valid PBS Authority Approvals", and that they should "not use the existence of a valid PBS Authority Approval as a way of verifying a prescription".

PDL also suggested caution when presented with phone, fax and emailed scripts for high-risk medication, and to encourage the use of electronic prescriptions.

Pharmacists should report forged prescriptions to state health departments and the police as soon as possible. *KB*

## Call to roll out new pneumococcal vax

AMID the worst outbreak of pneumococcal disease in 20 years, the Immunisation Foundation of Australia is urging the Federal Government to prioritise the rollout of the newer, broader-coverage pneumococcal vaccines that are approved by immunisation and regulatory authorities.

"Newer pneumococcal immunisations protect against more strains than the vaccines currently available, but a funding decision is mired in bureaucratic red tape," said Catherine Hughes, Immunisation Foundation Director and Founder.

"We have the tools to make a difference, and now is the time to ensure Australians at greatest risk of infection are protected," Hughes said.

With over 2000 cases this year, invasive pneumococcal disease is a leading cause of death and serious illness among children.

Non-invasive pneumococcal disease causes bronchitis, sinusitis and ear infections in children and the elderly.

## Guild condolences for Kevin Andrews

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Victorian Branch President, George Tambassis, together with the Guild's Victorian Branch, have expressed heartfelt condolences for the passing of former Liberal minister Kevin Andrews on the weekend.

"The Guild would like to acknowledge Mr Andrews' support of community pharmacy and its vital role as a primary healthcare provider during

more than 30 years as Federal Member for the Victorian seat of Menzies," said a Guild Victorian Branch spokesperson.

"Our thoughts are with his family, colleagues and friends at this time."

Kevin Andrews (1955-2024) served as a member of parliament from 1991-2022 and was Minister for Defence.

He had been battling cancer for the past year.

## TIME TO SWITCH

**Bion Tears**  
Lubricant Eye Drops  
No longer available

**Switch to Systane UD**  
Lubricant Eye Drops

**HP-Guar technology**  
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**PBS**  
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Springs: C. Dev Ophthalmol. 2010;45:139-147. Davitt et al. J Ocul Pharmacol Ther. 2010;26(4):347-353.  
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### Dispensary Corner

**ISN'T** there a saying along the lines of 'what you don't know can't kill you'?

Because you may prefer to not know that your breakfast is out to kill you.

But it's not the usual suspects, such as bacon or dripping or croissants with lashings of butter or sugar-filled cereal. It's toast.

When cooking starchy food at high temperatures, such as baking, frying, air-frying, or indeed toasting, a substance called acrylamide arises from the reaction between natural sugars in the food and the heat that causes browning.

Acrylamide has long been linked with cancer, but now some Spanish experts have reported a link with heart attacks and stroke.

Among the cheery findings were an almost doubled risk of cardiovascular death in people with conditions such as type 2 diabetes, and around a 50% increased risk of suffering heart disease in the next decade.

Acrylamide is not only found in toast and other deliciously browned starchy foods, but also ultra-processed foods and coffee (nnnooooo!).

The good news, according to other experts, is that you need to eat about 160 pieces of burnt toast a day for it to have a worrying effect - probably not an issue for most people.

And you can also reduce acrylamide exposure by cooking your food to a nice golden colour, rather than...well, burning it.

### Golfers' \$8K support for PSS

THE Victorian Chemists Golf Club (VCGC) has raised \$8,000 for the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS) at its recent charity day.

PSS Executive Officer, Kay Dunkley (pictured centre, with VCGC's Greg Clements and Leon Thomas), attended the event.

She talked about the work of PSS, the benefits of peer support, and how the donation will enable PSS programs to continue and expand.

Curtis Ruhnau, PSS President, said, "PSS values the support of VCGC, over several years, through their annual charity days.

"Their fundraising efforts are a further example of peer support, with members of the pharmacy profession providing funds which are used to support callers to PSS



who need a listening ear from a pharmacy colleague, on what may be the worst day of their life."

He also commended the health and wellbeing aspects of golf.

The PSS is available to provide anonymous and confidential support from 8am to 11pm AEDT every day of the year.

Call 1300 244 910 to connect. *KB*

### Symbion celebrates John Spick's service

**SOUTH** Australian pharmacist John Spick (pictured) has officially retired from community pharmacy, with healthcare company Symbion congratulating him on his remarkable career.

After nearly 60 years dispensing care and advice from Blackwood in the Adelaide Hills, Spick, who is now in his late '80s, has passed the baton for his TerryWhite Chemmart (TWC) pharmacy to new proprietor, Cindy Khuoc.

Symbion Chief Executive Officer Brett Barons wished Spick the very best in his retirement and thanked him for his enduring partnership with Symbion.

"John's selfless commitment to his community is something that is truly worth celebrating and it has been a privilege to have



supported his journey over many decades caring for generations of patients and customers," he said.

"To many of our Symbion team, John was more than a customer but a dear friend, and on behalf of the Symbion family we wish him nothing but the very best for the future."

### Guild Update

#### 'Find a Pharmacy' website launched

THE Guild is excited to announce the launch of a new and updated 'Find a Pharmacy' website, designed to improve how patients access community pharmacy services.

Launched last week, 'Find a Pharmacy' boasts a user-friendly interface that simplifies the search for pharmacies based on location, services offered and operating hours. The potential benefits of the 'Find a Pharmacy' website are promising for patients, but it will be immensely valuable for community pharmacy too.

As the healthcare landscape continues to shift, and more scope of practice services are rolled out, the site will play an integral role in connecting patients with these new services and educating them about the increasingly broad range of services available at community pharmacy.

Many hours of testing, planning and development informed the updated site, but we know it won't be perfect.

We want to gather as much valuable user feedback as we can to further enhance the site's functionality and ensure it meets the needs of our diverse community.

We invite you to explore the site, get to know how it works and provide your feedback via a user survey.

Visit the website **HERE**, and complete the survey **HERE**.





## Dealing with Staffing and Cost Challenges?

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