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with Vitamin C to aid absorption.\*  
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For use when iron deficiency or iron deficiency anaemia has been diagnosed by your doctor and a therapeutic iron supplement is recommended. Always read the label and follow the directions for use. If symptoms persist, worsen or change unexpectedly, talk to your health professional. \*Vitamin C has been shown to enhance the absorption of iron when taken together.



## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

### Vic cuts funding

**VICTORIANS** no longer have access to any pharmacies past midnight under changes introduced from 01 Jan.

The Pharmacy Guild told the *ABC* that govt funding cuts have led to pharmacies shortening their hours of operation on short notice.

The Victorian govt established Supercare Pharmacies in 2016 to help reduce pressure on busy emergency departments.

However, out of the original 20 Supercare pharmacies running across the state, just eight are still operating seven days a week.

From the start of this year, those eight pharmacies have now stopped operating 24 hours a day.

The Department of Health attributed the changes to a lack of demand for the services of Supercare Pharmacies.

"As a result of other govt investments, demand for Supercare Pharmacies has decreased significantly and they are no longer required in some areas," a Department of Health spokesperson said.

"The govt has established a range of alternative options for Victorians to get urgent care including Priority Primary Care Centres and the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, for less urgent care, people can still visit their local GP or call Nurse-on-call."

Paul Krassar, the acting president of the Victorian branch of the Guild, said the move was disappointing.

"If the funding wasn't cut, these pharmacies would continue to remain open.

"Speaking to a lot of the owners, even if they were breaking even with the funding, they would continue to open up," Krassar said.

## WA access works for UTIs

**WESTERN** Australian women have embraced the diagnoses and treatment of uncomplicated urinary tract infection by the state's community pharmacists, confirmed the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

During the initial five months of operation, pharmacists in 405 community pharmacies were trained and able to deliver the critical healthcare service.

Collectively they have provided over 2,500 occasions of service.

The Guild added access to early treatment from these medicines experts had delivered timely relief from the very painful symptoms of this acute condition.

At the time of its launch, Guild WA Branch President Andrew Ngeow (pictured), described the Pharmacist Initiated Treatment of Urinary Tract Infection program as being a "game changer" for women in the state (PD 07 Aug).

"These early results underscore the reasons the WA Branch advocated for the program to be established," Ngeow said.

"The true value of the program is already being demonstrated."

Community pharmacists who had undergone approved training began treating patients in the days immediately after the state's Minister for Health, Amber-Jade Sanderson, announced the program in Aug 2023.

Diagnosis and treatment of an uncomplicated urinary tract infection is now an entrenched core service provided by Western Australian community pharmacies, emphasised the Guild.



It is providing eligible women across Western Australia access to convenient, safe, and timely treatment options.

"The feedback that we are receiving from patients is that the program is achieving positive health outcomes," Ngeow added.

"Our goal as a sector is to continue to increase patient access, so that no Western Australian woman should be in pain and suffer unnecessarily, from this very painful condition.

"Given many of the community pharmacies providing this service are open seven days per week over extended hours, it is no surprise that Western Australian women are increasingly choosing to receive pharmacy-based treatment due to both its convenience and high-quality care," Ngeow commented.

The list of community pharmacies in Western Australia that offer urinary tract infection treatment can be found [HERE](#). JG

### Vyvanse shortage

**THE** TGA has informed that currently there are shortages of Vyvanse (lisdexamfetamine dimesilate) capsules 30mg, 50mg and 60mg which are expected to continue until Mar and Apr this year, depending on strength.

Takeda Pharmaceuticals' Vyvanse is used to treat conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and binge eating disorder.

### VaxApp software

**VAXAPP**, a pharmacy software with a vaccination eligibility engine, now automates vaccine suggestions at the time of booking.

The integration of VaxApp with the just launched National Immunisation Program Vaccines in Community Pharmacy (NIPVIP) Program marks an advancement in public health (PD 05 Jan 2024).

By automating the eligibility process, VaxApp can ensure that patients are recommended the appropriate vaccines at the right time, streamlining the immunisation journey for patients and pharmacists.

In light of this development, VaxApp is inviting pharmacies to discover what the software is able to do.

A free 60-minute demo is available, offering a comprehensive overview of how VaxApp can change vaccination delivery services.

"Our collaboration with NIPVIP is a testament to VaxApp's commitment to enhance public health through technological innovation," said Luke Renehan, VaxApp Founder and CEO.

"We are excited to offer pharmacies a tool that not only simplifies vaccine administration but also ensures adherence to the latest immunisation guidelines, in each state and territory of Australia," Renehan added.

Book a VaxApp demo [HERE](#).



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## Dispensary Corner

A 62-YEAR-OLD woman has been given permission by Western Australia's Supreme Court to remove sperm from her dead husband for possible use in posthumous fertilisation.

The woman had to make an urgent court application after the death of her 61-year-old husband late last year, *The Guardian* has reported.

Her husband's body was taken to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, but the court heard the woman was forced to apply for an order after the hospital did not promptly make a "designated officer" available to handle her request for sperm to be removed from her husband's body and stored while it remained viable.

Testing of the man's sperm found it still remained viable.

In granting the application, judge Fiona Seaward allowed the woman to remove the sperm but not to use it, as it required a separate court order.

WA doesn't allow posthumous fertilisation, so the sperm will need to move to another state.

## Expired COVID vax administered in Tas

THE Tasmanian Department of Health has identified a pharmacy in the north-west of the state where expired COVID-19 vaccines may have been administered.

The Guild's Tasmanian branch President, Helen O'Byrne (pictured), acknowledged the situation and encouraged individuals to consider the advice about COVID-19 vaccinations provided by the Department of Health, relevant to their age and health.

O'Byrne stressed that this breakdown in the stringent vaccine workflow processes was an event limited to a single pharmacy and that pharmacist immunisers working in community pharmacies have safely administered hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 vaccines to Tasmanians.

"As a fellow practising pharmacist, I am proud of the work that pharmacists working in our community pharmacies have done since the COVID-19 vaccine rollout," O'Byrne said.

"And I want to emphasise that Tasmanians can continue to have faith in the safety and effectiveness of the vaccination services provided at their local pharmacy."

She added that while it was



unfortunate, that people may not have received vaccines within the expiry range, vaccines given past their expiry date do not cause harm but may not provide full protection against COVID-19.

"Like influenza vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine is designed to help reduce serious illness if you contract the virus, however, the vaccines do not stop you getting COVID-19", O'Byrne explained.

She also noted that many people in the state have experienced at least one COVID-19 infection, and this has provided increased immunity in conjunction with protection provided by the recommended course of COVID-19 vaccine boosters.

"This is a timely reminder for individuals of all ages to keep up to

date with their COVID-19 boosters," O'Byrne remarked.

All pharmacists when dispensing medications, including vaccines, routinely check manufacturer expiry dates to ensure that medications are safe and effective.

COVID-19 vaccines have expiry date protocols, including manufacturer expiry dates and a shorter vaccine shelf life once the vaccine has been thawed in readiness for transport and administration.

"Of course, this incident serves as a timely reminder to all pharmacies to ensure there are correct processes, subject to re-evaluation and continuous improvement, in place and that their pharmacist staff are aware of what is required of them," O'Byrne said.

Tasmanian pharmacists will soon be able to deliver a wider range of vaccines to eligible Tasmanians as part of the Govt's expansion of the National Immunisation Program (PD 04 Jan 2024).

O'Byrne said that the approval process required by the State Health Department is robust and serves as another opportunity to reflect on current procedures within the pharmacy and make changes where required. *JG*

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## Digital Health Blueprint and Action Plan

THE Australian Govt's vision for digital health over the next 10 years has been unveiled in a new plan released recently.

The Govt stated that through the safe sharing of patient information, digital health enables more accurate diagnosis and consistent health management and empowers patients to understand and manage their health and make informed choices.

The *Digital Health Blueprint 2023-2033* will guide the Govt's work to increase the digital capabilities of the health system.

It outlines a coordinated path to a more connected health system, including primary care, mental health, hospitals, preventive health, medical research and ageing.

The idea is to respond to evolving technologies and patient needs - see more [HERE](#).



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