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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

H1 strong for MDR

MEDADVISOR (MDR) reported 18% growth with operating revenue of \$75.5m for H1 FY24 exceeding its guidance range, with a 13% increase in gross profit to \$43.5m on the previous corresponding period (PCP).

The company's second quarter FY24 operating revenue was \$50.2m, up 14% on PCP, with the US up 14% to \$44.9m and ANZ up 13% to \$5.3m.

The company's gross profit was up 5% to \$27.7m, with a gross margin of 55.2%, down 4.7 ppts on PCP.

MedAdvisor Solutions' digital offerings and data-driven insights will play a crucial role in supporting the delivery of expanded services under the North Queensland pilot.

Cormack Review issues paper out

THE first issues paper from the *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce Scope of Practice Review* has been released and recognises the existing barriers that prevent professionals, including pharmacists, from practising to their full and top scope.

Known also as the Cormack Review, the paper highlights both the urgent and the long-term need for pharmacists to contribute to improving access to care and medicine safety through working to their expanded scope.

PSA National President A/Prof Fei Sim commented the Cormack Review's first issues paper confirmed that "inconsistent regulations, unnecessary restrictions on practice, and siloed workforces are having a detrimental impact on patients".

"As pharmacists, we welcome the paper as the first step in the review process, however, we need to look now towards solutions."

The PSA added it saw a future

where community pharmacies were supported and funded to fulfil their primary care role as urgent care clinics where pharmacists can triage, manage and consult on a range of acute common ailments.

This included the ability to prescribe PBS medicines, harnessing the accessibility of pharmacists to deliver timely, cost-effective care, and reducing patients' out-of-pocket costs.

Sim, who currently sits on the Cormack Review's Expert Advisory Committee representing the pharmacy profession said, "we see a future where pharmacists are embedded in multidisciplinary healthcare teams wherever medicines are prescribed, supplied, administered or reviewed, and where pharmacists are utilised to support patients in managing chronic health conditions, whether that is a medicine or a referral to another healthcare provider".

"To achieve these aims, regulatory, financial and systems

barriers must be recognised and removed, and only until then, we can see the full potential of pharmacists unleashed."

Last year, the Dept of Health stated that extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement would inform the review, with findings provided to the Australian Govt in the latter half of 2024. JG

Vax fee increase

THE Pharmacy Programs Administrator announced today that fees payable to service providers for the COVID-19 Vaccination in Community Pharmacy Program will be increased from tomorrow.

The new fee for COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Payments (first, second and additional doses) is MM1 \$27.50 and MM2-7 \$30.65.

The Vaccination Incentive - Site Visit (flag fall) fee remains the same at \$123.

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Dispensary Corner

US AUTHORITIES revealed that they captured the convicted killer of professional cyclist Anna Moriah Wilson with a clever ruse: by placing an advertisement seeking a yoga instructor, which in turn lured the fugitive out of hiding, reported *The Guardian*.

Investigators with the US Marshals Service came up with the ad idea while on an international manhunt for Kaitlin Armstrong, a former yoga instructor who had fled to Costa Rica after killing the 25-year-old Wilson in May 2022 in Austin, Texas.

Investigators even enlisted a female operative to take local yoga classes with the hopes of spotting Armstrong, known to be a yoga enthusiast.

But police were unable to locate her.

In a last ditch effort, US investigators posted an advertisement looking for a yoga teacher on Facebook.

"Just saying, hey, we're at this hostel, we're looking for a yoga instructor as soon as possible.

"Please contact us at this number," said Fernandez.

After nearly a week of no response, Armstrong reached out saying she was interested in the job.

Police arrested Armstrong after confirming she had indeed been the one to respond to the ad, and extradited her back to the US.

A jury in late last year convicted Armstrong of murder, and she was later sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Tonnes of vapes seized

THE Australian Border Force (ABF) has stopped more than 13 tonnes of disposable vapes from entering the community after seizing a number of air cargo consignments in Adelaide.

This is the first large-scale seizure in Australia under the new vaping regulation that came into force on 01 Jan this year (*PD* 10 Jan).

ABF officers' suspicions were initially raised when 14 air cargo consignments, declared as "refillable atomiser", arrived from a single point of origin.

Following the detection in the consignments, which contained 10 tonnes of disposable vapes, ABF officers undertook rapid investigations, including warrant activity, resulting in the location and seizure of a further three tonnes of disposable vapes.

In total, the 13 tonnes of vapes have an estimated potential street value of more than \$4.5 million.

Inquiries into those involved in the importation are continuing.

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said, "the only groups who want to regulate and sell vaping products are those who profit once kids get hooked on nicotine big tobacco and tobacco retailers".



Single use disposable vapes are brightly coloured and bubble gum flavoured, intended to "entice young kids who are using them".

"This is all part of big tobacco's plan to recruit a new generation to nicotine addiction," said Butler, adding about one in six high school students are vaping, and about one in four young Australians aged between 18 and 24 are vaping.

"I thank the ABF for getting on with the job of stopping these vapes at the border and protecting our children."

ABF Assistant Commissioner Chris Waters said, "this is a clear signal to the whole community that the new vaping regime was well and truly underway.

"We expect many international vaping suppliers will continue to try to send products to Australia, and may seek to change their behaviour to avoid detection." *JG*

Future could be rural for NZ pharmacists

PHARMACISTS in New Zealand are being encouraged to settle in rural communities as part of the Govt's voluntary bonding scheme, which has included pharmacists for the first time.

Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand President Rhiannon Braund said there is a lot going for the country's smaller centres that should attract pharmacists to settle, but the cash incentive the scheme is offering "is a

welcome addition".

"Working in rural and regional New Zealand can provide a breadth and depth of early career experience not always available in urban settings.

"There is also the professional satisfaction of working in communities who appreciate pharmacists and other health professionals taking the plunge and moving to rural and regional areas," Braund commented.

CSL vax on NIP

CSL Seqirus has today confirmed that its cell-based influenza vaccine, Flucelvax Quad, will be available on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for the 2024 Australian influenza season.

Flucelvax Quad [quadrivalent influenza vaccine (surface antigen, inactivated, prepared in cell cultures)] is the first and only cell-based influenza vaccine available in Australia and will be reimbursed for people at higher risk of complications from flu.

The at-risk groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged five to 64 years, pregnant women, people aged five to 64 years with co-existing medical conditions such as cardiac disease, chronic respiratory, neurological or immunocompromising conditions, diabetes and other metabolic disorders, chronic renal failure, functional or anatomical asplenia; and long-term aspirin therapy in children aged five to 10 years.

CSL also stated that Afluria Quad will no longer be available on the NIP.

Results from the 2023 Australian Attitudes to Influenza Index, commissioned recently by CSL, indicated that healthcare professionals are highly respected providers of influenza information with 70% turning to them.

Importantly, among those who didn't intend to get vaccinated against influenza in 2023, 15% said they would be encouraged to get an influenza vaccination if their GP or pharmacist recommended it.