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## Focus to move program funding forward

**THE** Federal Government has signed a Strategic Agreement on Pharmacist Professional Practice Standards with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), alongside the eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA) (PD 03 Jun).

The five-year agreement starts on 01 Jul and aims to maintain the standards governing all pharmacists in Australia.

Under this agreement, the PSA will be responsible for developing, reviewing, and updating various practice standards, guidelines, codes, and competency frameworks.

The government will also engage in discussions with the PSA and other stakeholders about programs not covered by the 8CPA, which are delivered by pharmacists in various practice areas.

The agreement was signed in Canberra by PSA National President A/Prof Fei Sim and Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler.

Butler emphasised the importance of pharmacists in the healthcare system, stating, "Australians trust their local pharmacist to look after their health needs".

"This new agreement will support pharmacists to deliver more



services and cheaper medicines."

PSA National President A/Prof Fei Sim noted, "PSA's Strategic Agreement on Pharmacist Professional Practice acknowledges that the role of pharmacists is changing and evolving".

"The agreement provides a pathway to create data and evidence to demonstrate the need for long-term, continued funding for critical programs."

The lead negotiator for the PSA agreement Dr Shane Jackson, added with the announcement of the 8CPA and the strategic agreement, "our focus now shifts to optimising programs no

longer included in the 8CPA and developing new programs that may be delivered by pharmacists".

Anticipating further details of the additional \$103.3 million for new and improved pharmacy programs is Kristin Michaels, Chief Executive of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.

"We look forward to continuing our discussions regarding pharmacy programs not included in the 8CPA, such as the Home Medicines Review Program and Residential Medication Management Review Program," said Michaels, along with the extended use of the 22 specialty Standards of Practice. JG

**Pictured (L-R):** PSA CEO Steve Morris, Dr Jackson, Dr Sim, Assistant Health Minister Emma McBride, Butler, Health Dept's Secretary Blair Comley, and Deputy Secretary Penny Shakespeare.

## Earn more points

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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus full pages from:

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## Pharmacists can support eating disorders

**CURTIN** University research has found that an inpatient treatment approach called 'high-energy refeeding' can significantly improve both the physical and psychological health of adults with eating disorders.

This method, now commonly used to treat malnourished adolescents with anorexia nervosa can be used for adults, and involves progressively increasing energy intake over a short period to rapidly restore nutritional health.

Dr Emily Jeffery, co-author of the study, emphasised that while high-energy refeeding is beneficial for mildly and moderately malnourished adults, clinicians should adjust protocols for severely malnourished patients to prevent complications such as refeeding syndrome.

"This is a potentially fatal condition triggered by a sudden shift in fluid and electrolytes when a severely malnourished person starts eating again," Dr Jeffery told



**Pharmacy Daily.**

"Helping to avoid complications could be hospital pharmacists who can suggest how much suitable electrolytes should be given, depending on how low the levels are, along with monitoring and supplementing thiamine, phosphate, magnesium and potassium, and recommending suitable vitamins for these patients," Dr Jeffery explained.

The study's researchers investigated 97 voluntary hospital inpatients, including 55 adults and 42 adolescents with eating disorders, primarily anorexia nervosa, with both age groups showing similar positive outcomes in weight gain and psychological health improvements after

undergoing high-energy refeeding.

"A key point that came out of the study was that for adults it was safe, and they could tolerate the higher calorie refeeding protocol," added Dr Jeffery.

"Only one adult participant in our study did not tolerate the high-energy protocol due to oedema, which is an excess of fluid accumulating in body tissues," added Masters student and study lead Fiona Salter.

She mentioned that previous concerns about adult patients undergoing high-energy refeeding did not play out in the study.

Looking ahead, the research team plans to investigate the effectiveness of high-energy refeeding in less structured environments, such as intensive day programs, where patient meals are only partially supervised.

"We'll be exploring whether similar outcomes can be achieved outside the hospital setting," concluded Salter. *JG*

## Cosentyx on PBS

**NOVARTIS** Australia's Cosentyx (secukinumab) has been listed on the PBS for the treatment of Australian adult patients with active moderate-to-severe hidradenitis suppurativa (HS), who have had an inadequate response to conventional systemic HS therapy.

Cosentyx is a recombinant fully human monoclonal antibody that selectively inhibits interleukin-17A.

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### Dispensary Corner

FOR a couple of years, a group of adult friends in Longreach, Queensland, have been playing an annual month-long game of tag, all in the name of better health and mental wellbeing.

The rules are simple: no tagging back the person who tagged you, and no tagging your spouse or partner.

A group chat tracks the tags, with videos for proof, and the person who is "it" at 11:59pm on the last day of the month loses.

Beyond that, it's chaos, and things can get a bit wild.

Town resident, ABC's Nicole Bond, hadn't joined in the game previously, but under doctor's orders, decided to play.

She was in her GP's office, confronted with the usual questions: exercise, diet, alcohol consumption - too much of some, not enough of the others.

Then came the unexpected, "what do you do for fun?"

A simple question, but in her mid-career, middle-aged, mother-of-three life in middle Australia, she couldn't answer it.

After some navel-gazing, Bond decided to take fun seriously, and she joined the tag game.

Dr Tim Driscoll, a mental health specialist with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, says finding moments of connection and fun are critical to maintaining good mental health.

Adults need to play, he insists.

So now, when asked, Bond has an answer: "I hide in bushes, chase friends down the street, trespass into their homes, recruit their children to betray them, and for one month a year, let my inner child run wild".

## 8CPA gives funding surety



THE eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA) aims to provide a better deal for pharmacies and deliver a funding boost of \$3 billion and a total \$26.5 billion in funding over five years.

Signed yesterday (PD 03 Jun), key details of the funding package include \$22.5 billion for community pharmacies to dispense prescriptions to patients.

The government stated that from 01 Jul, it is establishing a new Additional Community Supply Support Payment of \$2.1 billion, which will replace the Regional Pharmacy Transition Allowance.

The Additional Community Supply Support Payment will give pharmacists "more confidence to continue delivering services for their patients, particularly cheaper medicines through 60-day prescribing, without increasing patient fees", said the Federal Health Minister Mark Butler.

The Federal Government will provide \$1.05 billion over five years for other pharmacy services and programs, including MedsChecks, and Staged Supply of medicines.

As announced in the Federal Budget 2024-2025 (PD 15 May), \$484.4 million will cover the costs of a one-year freeze on the

maximum PBS co-payment for everyone with a Medicare card, and up to a five-year freeze for pensioners and other concession cardholders in Australia.

"The 8CPA will deliver even more cost-of-living relief through cheaper medicines, thanks to the temporary freeze on indexation of PBS co-payments," said Butler.

"This is in addition to the more than \$370 million Australians have already saved through last year's cut to the maximum patient co-payment and the introduction of 60-day prescriptions."

The 8CPA allocates \$196.7 million to increase the number of patients who can receive funded Dose Administration Aid services.

Importantly, included in the agreement's funding pool is the provision for \$103.3 million for new and improved pharmacy-based programs. JG

**Pictured (L-R):** Health Dept Secretary Blair Comley, Guild Vic President Anthony Tassone, Butler, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Guild National President Trent Twomey, Assistant Health Minister Emma McBride, and Guild's Executive Director Gerard Benedet, and Health Dept's Deputy Secretary Penny Shakespeare.



### Guild Update

#### Pharmacist resupply of OCP to benefit WA women

THE Western Australian government's recent approval of Pharmacist Resupply of Oral Contraceptive Pills greatly improves access to contraception for the state's eligible women.

It also continues to expand the offering of services through community pharmacy.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia WA Branch President, Andrew Ngeow, commented that "the WA Branch was an integral part of the development of the WA Department of Health's Western Australian Protocol".

"This is the guiding document which outlines pharmacists' participation, including for approved training, and patient eligibility," he added.

"It was extremely important that the views of the pharmacy sector were considered in the development of the Protocol," commented Ngeow.

The 29 May announcement follows the authorisation of Pharmacist Initiated Treatment of Urinary Tract Infection in Aug last year, which has resulted in over 5,000 women accessing that service.

"I am very pleased that community pharmacy has the opportunity to provide women in Western Australia with greater access to safe, timely and convenient healthcare through these programs," Ngeow concluded.

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