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Today's issue of PD

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DCO partnership

DIRECT Chemist Outlet (DCO) has partnered exclusively with The Hairy Pill to offer its personalised hair loss treatment across its retail locations across Australia, marking a significant shift from the product's previous online-only business model.

"50% of Australian women and 80% of Australian men will experience hair loss, and we are thrilled to partner with Direct Chemist Outlet to expand access," said Maggie Stiebel, Director of Brand & Marketing at The Hairy Pill.

"This partnership brings an affordable and effective option to the masses, ensuring easy access through Direct Chemist Outlet stores," said Jonathan Stiebel, Director of Operations.

To celebrate the launch, DCO is offering a \$25 discount on The Hairy Pill's service for the first three months.

SA expands 24/7 access

SOUTH Australia will gain its fourth 24-hour community pharmacy in the outer southern suburbs, following soaring demand seen in the state's three existing round-the-clock pharmacies launched earlier this year.

Since opening in Feb and Mar (PD 05 Mar), nearly 120,000 people have accessed these after-hours pharmacies, prompting the Malinauskas Labor Government to expand the service.

To date, the Salisbury Plain Chemist Warehouse has seen nearly 70,000 after-hours visitors, while Clovelly Park has served over 33,000, and Norwood's National Pharmacies has recorded 15,000.

Combined, these locations have dispensed more than 49,000 prescriptions during extended

hours and handled close to 5,500 health-related calls.

The new 24/7 pharmacy, planned for the Hallett Cove, Sheidow Park, and Trott Park areas, aims to provide a convenient health option for southern suburb residents.

Selected through a competitive tender, it will be modelled after the current 24-hour locations that help ease emergency department demand by offering round-the-clock access to medicines and health advice.

CW pharmacist Philip Colasante said, "we're proud to support Adelaide with 24/7 pharmacy access alongside the SA govt".

National Pharmacies CEO Vito Borrello added, "there is gratitude for our after-hours service when no other option is available". JG

Cutting cervical cancer rates in Pacific

UNSW Sydney has received a record \$25.9 million donation from UK's Swire Group to support cervical cancer screening and treatment for over 130,000 women across seven Pacific nations.

The funding, the largest philanthropic gift in UNSW's history, will enable the Kirby Institute to collaborate with regional partners to address one of the Pacific's most deadly yet preventable cancers.

The donation will support women in Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

Cervical cancer is a leading cause of death among Pacific women, with rates up to 14 times

higher than in Australia.

"This generous investment enables partnerships to advance our vision of a world free of cervical cancer," said Samoa's Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mata'afa.

The project aims to make screening accessible through self-collection methods that deliver rapid results, overcoming logistical challenges in remote areas.

"This landmark investment will enable us to work with countries across the Pacific over the next five years to advance our collective vision of a world free of cervical cancer," said Prof Andrew Vallely, who is co-leading the work with Project Manager Vanessa Price.

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Dedicated to Care

Spotlight on rural health

THIS National Rural Health Month, the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) is celebrating healthcare success stories, and raising awareness of healthcare issues facing rural, regional, and remote communities in Australia.

The Alliance also wants to bring attention to the challenges that those Australians face in accessing adequate healthcare.

“Rural, regional, and remote communities experience poorer health outcomes compared to urban populations,” NRHA Chief Executive Susi Tegen (pictured) said.

“National Rural Health Month spotlights stakeholders working toward practical and sustainable healthcare solutions for rural Australians,” she added.

One key issue highlighted is the funding disparity: rural Australians receive \$848 less in healthcare funding per person annually, translating to a \$6.55 billion national shortfall.

This gap exists despite rural industries generating around 80% of Australia’s exports and producing



about 90% of its fresh food.

Rural Australians face a triple health disadvantage: limited access to services, higher healthcare costs, and socioeconomic challenges, leading to poorer health outcomes.

Despite these obstacles, rural communities across the country are known for their resilience and innovative approaches to healthcare, Tegen concluded. *JG*

Change at the top at Medicines Australia

DR ANNA Lavelle has announced her departure as Chair of Medicines Australia, ending a tenure marked by significant governance and strategic advances.

Dr Lavelle, who joined as an independent Director in 2017 and became Chair in 2018, will complete her term in early 2025.

Reflecting on her role, she said, “Medicines Australia placed great faith in me as independent Chair, and I worked hard to meet those expectations”.

“Balancing industry needs with government policy goals has been challenging, but I’m proud of our achievements in strengthening our position with stakeholders,” Dr Lavelle said.

Medicines Australia CEO Liz de Somer praised Dr Lavelle’s contributions, saying, “Anna has been a fearless leader and a mentor to me”.

“Her commitment to improving patient outcomes and advancing the sector is unmatched.”

The organisation also welcomed



five new Board Directors last week: Tori Brown (Lilly), Kathryn Evans (BioMarin), David Pearce (Takeda), Owen Smith (BMS), and Nirelle Tolstoshev (Astellas).

Adam Roach (Beigene) was also re-elected for a second term.

These additions replace departing members, bringing fresh perspectives and continuity to the Board, stated the group.

Dr Lavelle expressed confidence in the incoming Directors, noting their expertise will be crucial as the Board focuses on modernising Australia’s health technology assessment (HTA) system and maintaining the country’s global competitiveness in clinical trials.

De Somer affirmed this priority, emphasising the need for collective commitment to HTA reforms and strategic goals.

A gene could be key to treat hep B, C and D

A NEW study from The Westmead Institute for Medical Research suggests a promising target for treating chronic viral hepatitis, a disease affecting 450,000 Australians and claiming 1,000 lives annually.

Researchers found that the TM6SF2 gene, already linked to fatty liver disease, might also play a role in the spread of hepatitis B, C, and D viruses.

Led by Prof Mark Douglas and A/Prof Thomas Tu, the team discovered that reducing the effectiveness of TM6SF2 in lab tests significantly decreased the number of virus particles leaving the liver.

Further studies are needed to develop a safe drug targeting this gene, but the approach holds potential to transform hepatitis treatment worldwide.

Cutting salt will save thousands of lives

MANDATING stricter sodium limits in Australian packaged foods, in line with WHO targets, could prevent 40,000 cardiovascular events and 3,000 deaths over a decade, according to a study published in *The Lancet Public Health*.

Led by researchers at The George Institute for Global Health, the study suggests enforcing WHO’s sodium targets

could also prevent 32,000 new cases of kidney disease and save A\$3.25 billion in healthcare costs.

Current voluntary sodium benchmarks in Australia fall short, with most Australians consuming nearly double WHO’s recommended intake.

The George Institute’s Prof Jason Wu said adopting WHO’s benchmarks would benefit public health and the healthcare system.



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Dispensary Corner

A NEW study has some heavy smokers rethinking their "quit and be healthy" game plan.

It turns out, kicking a serious smoking habit doesn't mean your heart's ready to party anytime soon.

According to international scientists, heavy smokers might need to wait a whopping 25 years after quitting for their heart health to match that of non-smokers.

That's right - if you spent years puffing away, your old ticker apparently isn't so quick to forgive.

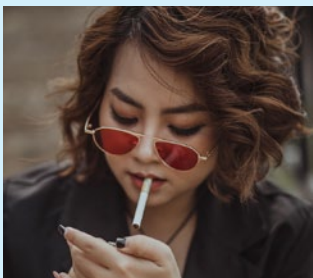
On the bright side, for those who dabbled lightly, the news is much better.

Researchers found that light smokers can see their heart health bounce back within a decade of quitting.

The study, which tracked data from over 5.3 million people from the Korean National Health Insurance Service database, suggested doctors may still view former heavy smokers as highrisk for heart problems - basically as if they'd never quit.

The bottom line?

For ex-heavy smokers, quitting is only half the battle - patience, it seems, is the other.



Race to halt gambling harm



AS AUSTRALIANS prepare for the Melbourne Cup today, concerns mount over rising gambling-related harms which include serious health trauma including brain changes due to high stress, psychological suffering, and suicide.

The Australian Government is facing criticism for its delay in responding to the parliamentary report *You Win Some, You Lose More*, which outlines urgent reforms to curb gambling-related damage.

Among its recommendations are phasing out gambling advertisements, enhancing public education, and establishing a national online wagering regulator.

Recent findings from the Lancet Public Health Commission amplify the urgency, calling for immediate global action.

The report revealed that gambling, in some form at least, is now legally permitted in more than 80% of countries worldwide.

Online gambling, given its borderless accessibility, is available everywhere via the internet.

The report, created by over 20 global experts, emphasises the need for robust regulation and the elimination of gambling advertising, especially those visible to children and young people.

Monash University's Associate Professor Charles Livingstone, a contributor to the report,

highlighted that gambling promotion exacerbates suffering and trauma.

Livingstone expressed concern over the explosive growth of gambling in the country.

"The harms associated with gambling are not trivial, and are rapidly expanding as the wagering sector surges on the back of significant advertising and marketing," he said.

"Between 2018-19 and 2022-23, wagering revenue grew by 54% in real terms, compared to growth in gambling overall of 8%, and poker machine gambling at 7%.

"We need urgent action to address this phenomenal growth in gambling losses, and associated harms," Livingstone urged.

"The good news is that the government has a well-crafted blueprint to act, based on the 31 unanimous recommendations of Peta Murphy's all-party committee," he added.

However, Livingstone warned that government action may be hindered by industry influence.

"The gambling industry, backed by media and sporting elites, seems to have the government's ear, stalling crucial reforms," Livingstone said.

"If we want to avoid further escalation of gambling-related harm, we need to act now." JG



Guild Update

Rural health does matter

NOVEMBER'S National Rural Health Month is a time for recognition and action to tackle the unique healthcare challenges facing these areas.

Community pharmacy plays a crucial role in bridging these gaps, with 74% of people outside cities having a pharmacy within 2.5km of them.

The Commonwealth Government's recent COVID-19 Inquiry Response Report highlights how pharmacies stepped up during the pandemic.

Pharmacy Guild of Australia's National President, Trent Twomey, praised pharmacists' resilience in providing over 12 million vaccinations.

"Pharmacies became a lifeline, especially in rural areas where healthcare services are scarce," Twomey said.

The report also recommends using the full expertise of pharmacists to support rural communities in Australia.

For example, pharmacists nationwide are now able to treat uncomplicated UTIs with antibiotics, which would help the nearly one in two women who will get a UTI in their lifetime, as well as help reduce the second highest potentially preventable hospital presentation.

National Rural Health Month is a great time to recognise how community pharmacy supports a healthier, more resilient rural Australia - and its potential to do more.

To learn more, **CLICK HERE**.

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¹ Alharbi BF, Alateek AA. Investigating the influence of probiotics in preventing traveler's diarrhea: meta-analysis based systematic review. Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease. 2024;59:102703.