

Today's issue of PD

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

- Dispense Assist
- Nova Pharmaceuticals

Dispensary help

DISPENSE Assist is a low-cost staffing solution with dispensary technicians available 24/7 at rates as low as \$6.37 per hour, for services that include compounding, DAAs and any other required task - details on [page three](#).

Proctocaine deal

NOVA Pharmaceuticals is inviting pharmacy owners around Australia to take advantage of a special offer and stock up on Proctocaine hydrocortisone for fast, soothing haemorrhoid relief - more details on [page four](#).

Ramsay CEO transition

NATALIE Davis will officially take charge as Managing Director and Group CEO of Ramsay Health Care effective from 02 Dec, the company announced today.

Davis (pictured) will replace Craig McNally (PD 31 Jul), who announced earlier this year he will be stepping down from the top job.

As previously confirmed, McNally will remain with the company until the end of Jun next year to assist with Davis' transition.

Addressing shareholders during the AGM, McNally said the company remains focused on transformation programs aimed at optimising its core hospital business, driving margin recovery, and improving returns for shareholders.

McNally said the company had seen growth in surgical, medical and rehab hospital admissions, while maternity and mental health admissions have declined.

From a technological standpoint, Ramsay continues to invest in AI robotics and treatment capacity,



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along with the best doctors from around the world to go with it.

McNally said the company is focused on "driving our own destiny" for FY25 despite what it said was "a constructive participation" in the Federal Government's review of the private hospital sector.

"We will continue to work with the industry to address some of the longer-term pressures we all face," McNally said.

Expressing concern about wage inflation, McNally said discussions will resume with its payors and suppliers to achieve fair compensation if levels rise above its forecast levels. *ML*

TGA flags anti-biotic shortage

PFIZER has alerted the regulator to an anticipated shortage of high-strength Bicillin L-A (benzathine benzylpenicillin tetrahydrate) 1.2 million unit prefilled syringe for injection from 20 Dec to 10 Jan 2025.

The TGA has approved an alternative overseas-registered product which is now currently available and is PBS-listed.

It is supplied as a powder that needs reconstitution before administration.

The TGA recommends pharmacists order the replacement product as soon as possible to prevent a gap in supply.

The ongoing shortage of Bicillin L-A (benzathine benzylpenicillin tetrahydrate) 600,000 unit prefilled syringes for injection is expected to continue until Apr 2025.

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*Peter RU and Rocjarrz-Barthauer U. Br J Dermatol 1995;132(3)441-5. Department of Dermatology, University of Munich, Germany. Janssen Research Foundation.



Dispensary Corner

DESCRIBED as a modern-day epidemic in Australia, loneliness doubles the risk of chronic disease and costs the health system \$2.7 billion annually.

But technology has a solution: AI chatbots.

A team at UNSW has developed some screen-based 'digital companions' imbued with qualities such as patience, empathy, knowledge and friendly encouragement.

The AI characters are designed to support people with various psychosocial challenges, such as dementia, ageing and depression, as well as loneliness.

They are not simply 'reactive', but thanks in part to co-design alongside people with lived experience of the target conditions, can plan and understand the psychosocial needs of users.

"In other words, the researchers are designing these companions to be much more like skilled friends in how they interact," the researchers said.

Honestly, they sound better than many actual people.

"I think we'd all agree that you can't replace a loved one with technology, says UNSW Professor Jill Bennett, who leads the research team.

"But we think there is something we can do to fashion technology so that it provides support, stimulation, entertainment and helps you find pathways to connect."

And think of the positives: not having to tidy the house, make sure the bikkies are fresh or change out of your jarmies.

GLP-1s protect kidneys

GLUCAGON-LIKE peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists have significant benefits for kidney and cardiovascular outcomes in people with and without diabetes, according to researchers from The George Institute for global health and published in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*.

The large and comprehensive analysis of the popular diabetes and obesity drugs, including semaglutide (Ozempic/Wegovy), dulaglutide (Trulicity) and liraglutide (Victoza), found that GLP-1 receptor agonists reduced the risk of kidney failure by 16% and the worsening of kidney function by 22%.

The analysis also confirmed previous findings that GLP-1 receptor agonists protect cardiovascular health, with a 14% reduction in the risk of cardiovascular death, non-fatal heart attack, and non-fatal stroke, compared to placebo.

Death by any cause was 13% lower among patients treated with



GLP-1 receptor agonists.

The results were particularly important for people with chronic kidney disease, which affects one in ten people worldwide and is the tenth leading cause of death.

The combined reduction in the risk of kidney failure, worsening kidney function, and death due to kidney disease was 19%. *KB*

Read the full paper [HERE](#).

Vision tests may help head off dementia

REGULAR eye tests may help predict our risk of developing dementia, researchers from Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) have found.

Led by Dr Nikki-Anne Wilson, the research looked at the effect of changes to eyesight on cognition over a 12-year period and found a link between visual acuity and cognitive performance across multiple domains.

"We show for the first time that the relationship between a decline in vision and global cognitive performance may be partly explained by reduced social contact," Dr Wilson said.

"People experiencing poorer vision may be more likely to avoid social events due to anxiety and this too may impact their cognitive performance."

Uncorrected vision loss was recently included as one of 14 key modifiable dementia risk factors by The Lancet Commission.

"A decline in vision can be caused by a range of factors, some of which are treatable," Dr Wilson said.

"What the research is now showing is that identifying these changes early and addressing them may help reduce the risk of developing dementia."



Guild Update

New title elevates

LAST week Health Minister Mark Butler announced changes to enable pharmacists to use the title Doctor of Pharmacy, bringing the profession in line with other health disciplines such as physiotherapy and podiatry.

The announcement was made at the Guild's Annual Parliamentary Dinner in Canberra, after many years of advocacy by the Guild.

The Federal Government endorsed a change that would allow the title to be used by graduates of an approved Australian Qualifications Framework Level 9 Masters (Extended) of Pharmacy.

"This recognition significantly enhances the professional credibility of pharmacists and reinforces their critical role in community health within Australia and globally," Pharmacy Guild National President Professor Trent Twomey said.

"The move is an important step forward for future community pharmacists who will soon be able to start their careers with the highest possible qualification.

"It also provides recognition of the extended scope of clinical practice being undertaken by pharmacists across Australia.

"The announcement advances the Guild's vision to change the current base registrable degree from a Bachelor of Pharmacy to a Masters (Extended) of Pharmacy," he said.

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