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Today's issue of PD

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

- Pointrs
- Pharmacist Advice

Save on travel

POINTRS is offering a free 30-day trial, giving pharmacists the opportunity to save big on their next holiday.

Using cash, airline and credit card loyalty points, members can save up to 81% on return international flights - see **p4**.

Position for growth

PHARMACIST Advice is looking for new members with a small store footprint, who are focused on patient-pharmacist interaction.

It is a growing brand with 10-plus stores added in the past 12 months - see **page five**.

PSA for ACT Labor

ACT Labor's re-election has been welcomed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), supporting the return of Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith.

PSA ACT President Olivia Collette highlighted the government's commitment to expand community pharmacists' scope of practice.

"Expanding pharmacists' roles will enhance health outcomes and ease pressure on the healthcare system," Collette stated.

UTI prescribing nationwide

AUSTRALIAN women can now access treatment for uncomplicated urinary tract infections at community pharmacies nationwide, without needing a prescription.

This development comes after the Northern Territory authorised community pharmacists to expand their services (**PD 28 Oct**), marking a significant step in women's healthcare access.

"Women are busy mothers, carers, bosses who need timely, easy-to-access relief to get on with their day and prevent long-term health complications," said Trent Twomey, National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

He emphasised that harmonising community pharmacy services across Australia will enable better, faster treatment for common conditions.

This initiative is part of a broader

transformation of women's health services available at pharmacies.

In many areas, women can already access resupplies of oral contraceptives, with some states even allowing pharmacists to initiate hormonal contraceptives. In addition, they can treat conditions affecting children, like asthma and ear infections.

With over 6,000 community pharmacies nationwide, this expansion supports the modern healthcare needs of Australians while easing pressure on GPs and emergency departments.

Twomey highlighted that "82% of Australians trust their pharmacist to provide health advice", and extended pharmacy services provide convenience for patients across urban, regional, and remote areas. *JG*

World Psoriasis Day

TODAY, on World Psoriasis Day, the healthcare industry needs to address the full impact of psoriasis beyond the skin, according to The Skin Hospital.

Dr Annika Smith, dermatologist at The Skin Hospital, highlighted the importance of effective treatment, stating, "psoriasis can drive systemic inflammation, impacting heart and mental health".

A recent survey shows 84% of people believe skin conditions negatively affect mental health, yet nearly 30% of those with them have never consulted a dermatologist.

\$19k fine for vapes

THE TGA has intensified efforts to curb illegal vape sales, issuing a \$18,780 fine to a retailer in Bundaberg, Qld, for unlawfully possessing over 350 vaping products.

TGA officers seized the items on 01 Aug during a joint operation with Queensland Health, enforcing the recent legislation (**PD 20 Jun**) which restricts vape sales to pharmacies only.

Prof Anthony Lawler, TGA Head, warned that illicit vaping products pose public health risks, adding, "the TGA will continue to act against non-compliant retailers".

World Stroke Day

WORLD Stroke Day observed today, emphasises the critical role of daily physical activity in preventing strokes, a leading cause of global disability affecting over 12 million people each year.

Up to 90% of strokes are preventable, and this year's campaign seeks to inspire action within communities, with Monash University experts highlighting the importance of lifestyle changes to reduce stroke risk.

Prof Dominique Cadilhac from Monash University's Stroke and Ageing Research Group explains the health impact of stroke, noting that "globally, stroke has devastating consequences, including death and long-term disability".

To reduce stroke rates, Monash researchers are advancing prevention strategies, including a new digital health program developed with CSIRO, enabling individuals to monitor physical activity and other lifestyle factors.

Monash and the Stroke Foundation have launched 'Love Your Brain', a digital initiative designed to raise awareness about stroke prevention.

Prof Monique Kilkenny, leading the project, stresses prevention's importance, while Dr Lachlan Dalli suggests simple ways to increase daily movement, from taking regular stretch breaks to aiming for 30 minutes of exercise most days.



NOVELLA -1

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Ask your pharmacist about this product. Always read the label and follow the directions for use. If symptoms persist talk to your health professional. Novella-1 contains levonorgestrel 1.5mg per tablet. For emergency contraception within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse. Do not take this medicine: • If you are allergic to levonorgestrel • If you are already pregnant • If you previously had unprotected intercourse more than 72 hours earlier in the same menstrual cycle, as you may already be pregnant • If you have unexplained vaginal bleeding • If you have breast cancer. Tell your pharmacist or doctor before use if you: • are taking other medications • have any medical conditions. Read the pack insert before use. Contains lactose as monohydrate. Also contains pregelatinized starch, maize starch, povidone, magnesium stearate, and colloidal anhydrous silica. N260924s31.0

CONTACT NOVA on 1300 904 541 TODAY



\$10m to fight skin cancer



THE Federal Government has committed \$10.3 million to combat Australia's most common cancer, skin cancer.

With the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, two in three Australians will be diagnosed with some form of the common disease in their lifetime.

Melanoma, the most lethal form, affected over 18,000 Australians last year.

The funding aims to accelerate the development of a national skin cancer screening road map, focusing on early detection.

The initiative will be led by Professors Georgina Long and Richard Scolyer from the Melanoma

Institute Australia.

The program will work with other cancer experts to research risk-based, cost-effective screening approaches and improve data collection for the Australian Cancer Database in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

This investment is in addition to the government's \$15 million national skin cancer prevention campaign, which encourages Australians to follow the five S': slip, slop, slap, seek, and slide.

The Federal Health Minister, Mark Butler, stressed, "skin cancer is our national cancer, but it's also one of the most preventable".

He emphasised the importance of prevention and early detection.

Prof Long praised the investment, calling it "a major first step forward in establishing this key program".

Prof Scolyer added, "prevention is better than a cure, and the more investment in this area the better, from our perspective". JG

Crackdown on illegal vapes in NT

ENFORCEMENT efforts to tackle the illegal sale of vapes are intensifying across Australia, with a recent crackdown in the Northern Territory resulting in the seizure of approximately 1,700 illegal vapes.

Five retail businesses were fined a total of more than \$93,000 for violations.

The operation, part of a joint enforcement initiative between the TGA, NT Health, and NT Police, investigated around 60 businesses in areas in Darwin and Katherine.

This effort is part of ongoing enforcement of the Australian Government's vape reforms under the *Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Act 2024*, which restricts the sale of vapes to pharmacies only.

Since Jul 2024, authorities have been conducting inspections nationwide to educate and warn retailers about the unlawful



advertising and sale of vaping and related products.

This domestic action complements the work of the Australian Border Force, which has seized over 5.8 million vaping products worth more than \$174.6 million since Jan 2024.

Last week, the TGA also worked with the Victorian Police to arrest eight people for their role in an organised crime syndicate in the illicit tobacco market.

During the operation, Victoria Police issued 27 search warrants and seized 600,000 tobacco sticks, tobacco products and vapes to combat the illegal trade of these goods.

Time to rethink your dispensary set-up?

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Dispensary Corner

IN A tale straight from the “you-can’t-make-this-up” files, a 23-year-old man in India found himself facing a very creepy cause for his post-meal indigestion: a live, 3cm cockroach inside his digestive tract, according to *Uniland*.

The mystery began when the man reported persistent bloating and discomfort after eating some street food.

However, his doctor, gastroenterologist Dr Shubham Vatsya, had a different theory: the cockroach might have crawled down his throat as he slept.

The uninvited tenant was discovered during a routine inspection, prompting an immediate endoscopy to remove it.

Using the scope’s suction button, the team successfully dislodged the critter and spared the man from a potentially life-threatening (and wildly unsettling) ordeal.

Naturally, social media erupted, with reactions ranging from horrified to humorous.

One user summed it up, “I’m going to pretend I didn’t read that and move on with my life”.

Another questioned how the cockroach survived and commented, “I bet it hit that stomach acid and bolted for the nearest crevice - right through the pyloric sphincter bypassing a lot of the process that would have otherwise killed it”.

Another quipped, “I guess it’s time to stop eating...then again lunch?”

As for the man, he got an unforgettable tale to tell.

New link to peanut allergy



EXPOSURE to higher levels of air pollution in infancy is linked to a heightened risk of peanut allergies persisting throughout childhood, according to a new study by Murdoch Children’s Research Institute (MCRI) and the University of Melbourne.

Published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, the study suggests that improving air quality could reduce peanut allergy prevalence and persistence.

The study, part of Melbourne’s HealthNuts project, followed 5,276 children from age one to 10.

Researchers analysed air pollution exposure, particularly fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2), at participants’ homes and found that higher levels of these pollutants correlated with increased peanut allergy risk, though no link was found with egg allergies or eczema.

MCRI’s investigator A/Prof Rachel Peters noted, “this rise in allergies has coincided with urbanisation, supporting theories that environmental factors contribute to high allergy rates”.

She highlighted the study’s unique use of an oral food challenge to confirm peanut allergies.

University of Melbourne researcher Dr Diego Lopez explained that airborne pollutants may promote pro-allergic immune responses, especially when peanut allergens are also present, but

further research is needed to clarify this mechanism.

Prof Peters advocates for air quality policies, saying, “early-life interventions to reduce air pollution exposure could prevent peanut allergies”.

Allergic disease is one of Australia’s greatest public health challenges, with one in 10 developing a food allergy in their first year of life.

Measures like urban planning improvements, better public transport, and transitioning to non-combustion fuels could all help, stated the MCRI researchers.

The findings also connect to the broader research by MCRI’s Generation Victoria (GenV) study, examining climate change’s impact on children’s health, gathering data from more than 120,000 participants, including 48,000 babies.

MCRI researchers are linking information on heat vulnerability with perinatal and child health data from the GenV cohort and are seeking to include temperature extremes and climate-related disaster evidence in the future.

MCRI researcher A/Prof Suzanne Mavoia said this would improve our understanding of how climate change impacts the health of children and families, identify those most at risk, and test policies and interventions to better protect against severe weather events. *JG*



Guild Update

Beware of scammers

CYBERSECURITY Awareness Month highlights the importance of protecting your business against digital threats, so Oct is a timely reminder for community pharmacies to be vigilant.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has received reports of sophisticated scams targeting pharmacies.

Scammers, posing as bank staff, are contacting pharmacy teams with requests to access systems remotely, often citing urgent banking issues.

Remember, legitimate banks will never request remote access to your systems.

If you receive a suspicious call, avoid following instructions directly from the caller.

Instead, reach out to your bank using its verified fraud contact number to confirm the legitimacy of the request.

Cybercrime reports are increasing across Australia, posing risks to every business.

To protect your pharmacy and patient data, follow these four simple steps: turn on multi-factor authentication; keep your devices and software updated; use strong and unique passwords; and recognise and report any phishing attempts.

Take this opportunity to discuss cyber security with your staff, and to learn more, **CLICK HERE**.

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