

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **Nova Pharmaceuticals' Maxofen**.

Mayne opens new facility

MAYNE Pharma officially opened a newly expanded manufacturing facility yesterday in Salisbury, South Australia, attended by SA Minister for Trade and Investment Joe Szakacs and other dignitaries.

Occupying a 12 hectare site, the facility is built for large scale production of oral and topical dosage forms including tablets, capsules, powders, pellets, liquids and creams.

Its completion provides Mayne with significantly greater manufacturing capacity and capability to support new product launches and exports from the site.

Top 10 drugs for 2024-25

PHARMACEUTICAL Benefits Scheme (PBS) data for the financial year 2024-25 has revealed some new entries in the top 10 most expensive drugs in terms of cost to government, with COVID antivirals dropping out.

Number one by some margin was cancer drug pembrolizumab (Keytruda), costing over \$680 million for around 80,000 prescriptions.

Cystic fibrosis treatment elxacaftor + tezacaftor + ivacaftor (Trikafta) was in second place at \$618 million for 29,000 prescriptions, the most costly top 10 drug per prescription.

New entries in the list were type 2 diabetes drug semaglutide (Ozempic), costing \$341 million as supply shortages resolved, and JAK inhibitor upadacitinib (Rinvoq), which is used to treat autoimmune diseases, at \$287 million.

COVID antivirals molnupiravir (Lagevrio) and nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid) dropped from the top 10 this year.

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Maximise your day

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Blood thinner apixaban (Eliquis), which cost \$282 million, made the list through sheer weight of numbers, with over 4.3 million prescriptions.

The remaining drugs were autoimmune disease anti-inflammatory biologic ustekinumab (e.g. Stelara); osteoporosis drug denosumab (e.g. Prolia); asthma and eczema anti-inflammatory dupilumab (Dupixant); cancer immunotherapy drug nivolumab (Opdivo); and aflibercept (Eylea and Zaltrap) used to treat wet age-related macular degeneration and metastatic colorectal cancer.

Meanwhile, the top 10 drugs by daily dose comprised cholesterol-lowering rosuvastatin and atorvastatin; hypertension/heart medications perindopril, amlodipine, candesartan, telmisartan and ramipril; SSRI antidepressants escitalopram and sertraline; and type 2 diabetes drug metformin. KB

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Molly McGuire, Network Partner
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Sexual misconduct on record

THE Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and National Boards have announced changes to the way sexual misconduct is reported on the public register of practitioners, commencing early next year.

Practitioners who have a tribunal finding of professional misconduct involving sexual misconduct will have this information permanently published on the register.

Included on the register will be information stating that the practitioner engaged in professional misconduct on the basis of sexual misconduct, a record of any sanctions imposed, and the tribunal decision (if published).

The change is retrospective and will apply from the start of regulation for the profession.

In deciding to implement this change, health ministers sought to protect public safety and ensure people are able to make an informed choice when selecting a health practitioner.



Ahpra and the National Boards are finalising guidance on sexual misconduct and the National Law following extensive consultation and will release it as soon as possible.

"This change will be distressing for some practitioners," Ahpra noted.

"If you are contacted by Ahpra about additional information being put on your register entry, we encourage you to contact your insurer, professional association or legal adviser for guidance and support."

Ahpra pointed pharmacists to Pharmacists' Support Service **HERE**, or phone 1300 244 910 from 8am to 11pm AEDT.



DID YOU KNOW

There's a probiotic that can promote bowel regularity

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CAR T-cell therapy service for SA

THE South Australian government has announced it will establish a dedicated CAR T-cell therapy service as a line of treatment for people living with blood cancer, marking a major advancement in cancer care in the state.

Expected to commence by mid-2026, the service will significantly improve access to this highly specialised, life-saving treatment and reduce the burden of travel for South Australians who currently go interstate for care.

Leukaemia Foundation Chief Executive Officer Chris Tanti said the announcement represented a huge win for blood cancer patients and their families.

"This is a landmark step forward for people living with blood cancer in South Australia," Tanti said.

"CAR T therapy offers new hope to patients who have already endured multiple lines of treatment and may have very

limited options left.

"For many, it is not just another therapy - it can mean better quality of life and improved survival outcomes."

The Leukaemia Foundation said the announcement also represented an important step toward addressing healthcare inequity in the state.

"By investing in CAR T, the South Australian Government is narrowing the gap in access to innovative cancer treatments and improving health outcomes for people living with blood cancer," Tanti said.

"This is about equity - ensuring a patient's postcode does not determine whether they can access the latest, potentially life-saving therapies."

The Leukaemia Foundation continues to advocate for CAR T treatment centres in every Australian state and territory, so patients are no longer required to travel interstate for care.

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Dispensary Corner

CHRISTMAS is a wonderful time of year, but it can have certain downsides - one of those being weight gain due to indulgence over the holidays.

A study conducted last Christmas by the University of South Australia found that Australians consumed, on average, an extra 136 calories per day in Dec compared to other times of the year, which can equate to roughly 0.5kg of weight gain over the month - if the extra intake isn't counteracted with increased activity or reduced intake later.

Weight gain over the festive period need not be inevitable though - a recent study published in the *British Medical Journal* pinpointed how it can be avoided.

A team of researchers tracked 272 volunteers over two Christmas periods - half were given basic advice, encouraged to weigh themselves twice a week and shown how much exercise it would take to burn off common festive treats, while the rest were asked to carry on as normal.

Those given no guidance gained an average of 0.37kg between Nov and Jan, while, those who received advice actually lost around 0.13kg. "Our research shows that a brief intervention over the Christmas period can help prevent the small weight gains that accumulate over time and drive the obesity epidemic," said one of the study's authors, Professor Amanda Daley from Loughborough University.

Ross River virus mosquito warning

HOLIDAY makers are being urged to stay vigilant against mosquito bites this summer, as warmer temperatures heighten the risk of Ross River virus outbreaks, especially in riverland and coastal regions.

Ross River virus is common in Australia, with around 3,000 cases reported annually, and causes a rash, fever and joint pain.

A scoping review led by the University of Adelaide analysed 30 studies looking at the disease and temperature in Australia, finding that Ross River virus risk increases when temperatures rise, but there were differences across geographic regions.

"It is very hard to predict Ross River virus outbreaks, with a complex range of factors

contributing to increased risk, including rainfall, humidity, and stagnant water conditions," said lead author Christina Varghese.

"But we know that cases are more likely when temperatures are between 17 and 31 degrees, with infections spiking at around 26 degrees," she explained.

"That's why it's important for Australians to be alert and protect themselves from mozzie bites over the Christmas and New Year period," Varghese said.

Terry Slevin, CEO of the Public Health Association of Australia, said that Australia's new Centre for Disease Control (CDC) will need to watch these issues closely.

"As the Australian weather warms due to climate change, we are likely to see different parts of Australia



exposed to mosquito carried diseases like Ross River Fever and Barmah Forest virus.

"Australia's CDC will be monitoring these issues and is already providing advice on mosquito bite prevention," he said.

This includes using insect repellents available from pharmacies that contain diethyltoluamide (DEET), picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), and following the instructions on the label. KB

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