

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

NSW extended scope reminders

NSW Health has recently reminded pharmacists and pharmacy owners about the requirement to be listed on the National Health Services Directory (NHSD), Healthdirect Australia, when prescribing Schedule 4 medicines.

Expanded scope services for treatment of urinary tract infections (UTIs), hormonal contraception resupply, and the management of skin conditions trial can only be offered by pharmacies on the NHSD, and the listings must be kept current.

PDL reminds pharmacy owners that they must be aware of and understand all services provided in their pharmacy.

'The Patient Doctor' at APP

BEN Bravery - doctor, author, and patient advocate - will share his inspiring story at APP2025.

"Ben's unique perspective as both a patient and a doctor offers invaluable insights into health care and the vital role pharmacists play in improving patient outcomes," said APP convenor Kos Sclavos.

Originally a zoologist and science communicator, Dr Ben Bravery (pictured) was diagnosed with stage 3 bowel cancer when he was 28.

His experience as a patient inspired him to pursue medicine, becoming a doctor in 2018 and now training to be a psychiatrist.

Bravery is a passionate advocate for change in Australia's health care system, particularly in colorectal cancer, medical education, and patient-centred care.

In his session, Bravery will talk about his journey from patient to doctor, exploring the lessons he learned along the way and his vision for a more compassionate and connected healthcare system.



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"Ben's story is a powerful reminder of the impact health care professionals can have on the lives of their patients," said Sclavos.

"His insights into navigating care from both sides of the equation are sure to resonate with our delegates," he added.

The session will take place on Fri 21 Mar, from 09:45 am to 10:30am.

See the full program [HERE](#). KB

Call for diabetes tech funding

DIABETES Australia is calling on both sides of politics to commit to a \$200 million investment in diabetes technologies in the upcoming Federal Election.

Expanding subsidies for insulin pumps and continuous glucose monitoring devices will ensure that the more than 1.5 million Australians living with all types of diabetes have access to the technology they need to live well, it said.

Diabetes Australia Group CEO Justine Cain said the devices can change and save lives.

"Not only do they enhance quality of life, research shows that they also reduce hospital admissions, and prevent long-term complications such as heart disease, blindness, and kidney failure," Cain said, adding that many people simply cannot afford the devices.

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References: 1. CELEBRES RELIEF[®] (celecoxib) Product Information. 2. Ekman EF et al. Am J Orthop 2002; 31(8):445-451. 3. Petri M et al. J Rheumatol 2004;31(8):1614-1620. 4. Ralha LV et al. Revista Brasileira de Medicina 2008; 65(11):378-387. 5. Bertin P et al. J Int Med Res 2003;31(2):102-112. 6. Cheung R et al. Clin Ther 2007;29:2498-2510.

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Dispensary Corner

CHEESE - is there anything it can't do?

In great news for cheese and booze lovers, an actual medical doctor says that cheese can prevent hangovers.

"If you are going for a night out on the town, and you are going to drink alcohol, eating cheese before drinking alcohol can decrease your risk of having a hangover," Dr Neena Chandrasekaran, a pulmonary critical care physician from Florida, said on TikTok (uh oh). "Cheese has a lot of protein, fat and complex carbs that can coat the stomach, which decreases the absorption of alcohol," she explained.

Who knew cheese was rich in complex carbs?

She says cheese can also help the body better metabolise beer and cocktails, potentially reducing liver damage.

Meanwhile, cheese replaces nutrients lost to alcohol, such as B vitamins and calcium, with blue cheese, camembert and parmesan being great choices.

The learned medical journal reporting this cutting edge science, the *New York Post*, backed these claims with reference to a 2023 Korean study that found probiotic cheese enriched with *Lactococcus lactis* and *Lactiplantibacillus plantarum* bacteria can reduce hangover symptoms by enhancing the liver's ability to process alcohol via the activation of specific signalling pathways.

So, bring on the cheese platter and say cheers.

Heart health: time to talk prevention

WITH Heart Health Awareness Month in full swing, experts are calling for a renewed focus on lifestyle measures that support heart health.

Leading cardiologist Dr Ross Walker (pictured) recommends pharmacists have a conversation with patients about measures they can take to keep their hearts healthy.

"It's a very important discussion to have with clients or customers, regardless of what's going on," Dr Walker told *Pharmacy Daily*.

Key to a healthy heart is prevention, said Dr Walker, outlining what he calls his five keys to good heart health.

"Number one is that you cannot be healthy and smoke, drink too much grog or snort cocaine."

The second is getting seven to eight hours' sleep per night, while the third is good nutrition - "eat less food and eat more natural food".

Only 5% of the population eat the recommended servings of fruit and vegetables per day, Dr Walker pointed out, but those who do have the lowest rates of heart disease and cancer in the community.

"Number four is the second-best drug on the planet, which is three to five hours every week of moderate exertion," he said.

And number five, which is "easily the best drug on the planet", is happiness, and part of people's happiness is their contact and connection with others.

A recent study published in *Nature* revealed social isolation and loneliness could increase the risk of and worsen outcomes of cardiovascular events.

"Evidence shows that factors like stress, loneliness and inflammation can contribute to poorer outcomes," Dr Walker said.

"A balanced lifestyle that includes

meaningful social interactions, alongside physical and dietary health, is essential for protecting your heart."

As for supplements, they are not strong enough to override bad health behaviours.

"I often say that the supplements make healthy people healthier and make the drugs work better if you have an established disease, but don't ever see them as a replacement for medication or a healthy lifestyle."

One supplement that may help some people is ubiquinol, or co-enzyme Q10, especially once they reach 50 years old and levels deplete, or they are taking a statin.

On a cellular level, the heart relies on mitochondria, the body's energy producers, Dr Walker explained, and the antioxidant ubiquinol is essential for energy production.

"Statin directly deplete co-enzyme Q10 levels in the mitochondria, which is why 10 to 20% of people who take statins get problems with muscle pain, stiffness, weakness, cramping and even, over time, loss of muscle bulk.

"I use ubiquinol to try and counteract that effect, and it is quite effective in the vast majority



of my patients."

Dr Walker said that it is really good to see that the pharmacist's importance in the health milieu is becoming stronger.

"As doctors are getting time poor and it's getting much harder to see the doctor, a lot of the responsibility is moving towards pharmacists to take up the cudgels of what we doctors used to see as our domain," Dr Walker told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"And I think it's important that pharmacists are not just selling people products but also giving them this extra service - discussing how to remain healthy."

"Personally, I'm delighted for every good health professional to talk about the vital importance of prevention," Dr Walker said. *KB*

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