

# START THE CONVERSATION CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

Your patients aged  $\geq 50$  years may be aware of shingles—but do they really understand its cause, risks and impact?

Nearly all adults aged  $\geq 50$  years are likely to be at risk of shingles, no matter how healthy they may feel.<sup>\*1–3</sup>

This **Shingles Awareness Week**, take the lead and start a conversation with your patients about preventing shingles.

Hypothetical patients. For illustration purposes only.

\*Immunocompromise in people aged 18 years and older, caused by immunosuppressant drugs or immunodeficient conditions, may also cause immune system decline and increase their risk of shingles.<sup>1,3</sup>

**References:** **1.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Prevention of herpes zoster: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). MMWR. 2008 June;57(RR-5):1–30. **2.** National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS). Zoster (shingles) vaccines (Shingrix® [RZV] and Zostavax® [ZVL]) – frequently asked questions. Nov 2023. Available at: [ncirs.org.au/zoster-shingles/zoster-shingles-vaccines-shingrix-rzv-and-zostavax-zvl-frequently-asked-questions](https://ncirs.org.au/zoster-shingles/zoster-shingles-vaccines-shingrix-rzv-and-zostavax-zvl-frequently-asked-questions) [Accessed December 2024]. **3.** Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). Australian Immunisation Handbook, Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra, 2022. Available at: [immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au](https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au) [Accessed December 2024].

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*"I'm fit and healthy—I can't be at risk of shingles."*

**MYTH**



**GSK**



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### Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features four pages of news, plus a front cover from **GlaxoSmithKline**, and a full page from **Juno Labs**.

### Shingles awareness

**MOST** adults aged 50 and over are likely to be at risk of shingles, but many may not understand its cause, risk and impact.

GSK is promoting Shingles Awareness Week, which starts 24 Feb, so now is a good time to have a conversation with patients about prevention.

See the **cover page** for more.

### SurgiPack is back

**JUNO** Labs is the exclusive new distributor for one of Australia's most trusted pharmacy healthcare brands.

See **page five** for more.

## PSA, AdPha campaign for better pall care

**GROWING** shortages of essential medicines have driven Palliative Care Australia (PCA), in collaboration with other health and care organisations, to campaign for better access to palliative care.

"Those responsible seem stuck for answers, so we have collaborated with our members and six other leading health and care organisations to help lead the way," said Dr Peter Allcroft, Chair, Palliative Care Australia.

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) are among the collaborators.

As part of the campaign, PCA has launched an 11-point plan to resolve this ongoing issue, with recommendations centring on establishing a national stockpile of critical medicines, fostering domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing, strengthening the PBS and empowering the TGA.

The shortages are having a devastating impact on patients,

especially those nearing the end of life, and the clinicians who care for them.

"Patients are suffering unnecessarily, enduring heightened pain and distress, because the medications that typically control their symptoms are either unavailable or prohibitively expensive," Dr Allcroft said.

Most of the affected medicines are opioid analgesics that have been used for decades to manage severe pain and other symptoms in palliative care patients.

With the supply of these drugs becoming increasingly uncertain, clinicians are forced to prescribe less effective alternatives, resulting in less reliable pain relief and risking unwanted side effects.

Many of the alternative medications are not subsidised through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and cost a lot more.

One example is hydromorphone SR, which costs the public \$182 for

100 tablets, while the non-PBS-listed alternative costs \$4,209 for 100 tablets.

Despite sector representations to the Minister for Health, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Department of Health and Aged Care, Dr Allcroft said there has been little progress toward ensuring a stable supply of these life-changing drugs.

"Around 400 people die every day of a terminal illness; limited or no access to these critical medications has a ripple effect through families and communities - it can leave loved ones with lifelong trauma," said Dr Allcroft.

"We remain hopeful that those who want to make up the 48th parliament of Australia will respond and work with us to fix this so that quality of life at the end of life can be delivered to every Australian."

The 11-point plan forms part of Palliative Care Australia's 2025 Federal Election Platform and can be viewed and downloaded **HERE**.

## Looking to purchase your first pharmacy? Want to expand your portfolio? Planning to introduce partners or retiring?

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## MMR recognition of prior learning deadline

**PHARMACISTS** seeking Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the new Medication Management Review (MMR) Credential should ensure all evidence is submitted by 22 Apr to guarantee processing before interim funding arrangements end on 30 Jun, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has urged.

From 01 Jul 2025, those who have not obtained a new credential will be unable to claim fees for MMR services when their current Medication Review Numbers (MRNs) will become invalid.

The PSA guarantees that pharmacists who submit a complete MMR RPL application before 22 Apr will have their RPL processed and new credential issued before 01 Jul.

Submissions made after this date will still be processed, but they may not be completed before 1 Jul.

As part of PSA's ongoing support for consultant pharmacists, the



society will also continue to provide complimentary MMR RPL for Professional Plus members.

PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim said the guarantee gives pharmacists certainty about their ability to continue providing MMR services without interruption.

"I strongly encourage pharmacists who have not yet enrolled in the

RPL course and submitted the required evidence to do so as soon as possible," Associate Professor Sim said.

PSA Consultant Pharmacist Community of Specialty Interest Chair Deborah Hawthorne encouraged pharmacists to connect with the CSI for support. *KB*

Learn more about MMR RPL and the steps you need to take [HERE](#).

## Pharmacy Guild Update

The Guild is hosting two webinars about pharmacy ownership on Wed 26 Feb.

Up first at 6pm (AEDT) and tailored toward early career pharmacists looking to start their ownership journey, 'Rx Futures: Owning your future' will feature industry-renowned business broker Natalie Sirianni from Medici Capital and pharmacy owner Alexander Look.

Attendees will be guided through key preparatory steps for ownership and hear stories and insights about the journey, challenges and successes of making ownership a reality.

Attendees will get exclusive access to the Guild's Pharmacy Buying Guide, normally for members only - register [HERE](#).

For those who already own a pharmacy, 'Workforce planning and recruitment' is on at 7:15pm (AEDT).

In this session, Heidi Dariz from Raven's Recruitment will share best practices for attracting top-tier talent, while Andrew Pattinson from Guild Group will explore how strategic workforce planning can improve efficiency, support staff retention, and enhance patient care.

The session will examine staffing models, adapting to industry trends and implementing changes for long-term success, ensuring your pharmacy remains competitive - register [HERE](#).

## Pharmx partners with Toniq

**PHARMACY** software company Pharmx Technologies has just announced a major partnership with Toniq, NZ's leading provider of pharmacy POS and dispensary software solutions, to offer its flagship product Gateway to the company's 900 customers.

By integrating Gateway with Toniq's platform, pharmacies can significantly streamline ordering and inventory management, saving an average of 40 minutes per order.

The partnership gives Pharmx near-total coverage across Aus and NZ pharmacy sectors.

## Your career is what you make it: podcast

**JOIN** host Krysti-Lee Patterson as she sits down with Katelyn Ingram, an inspiring leader in pharmacy and HealthTech, in the latest episode of 'Your Pharmacy Career Podcast'.

Ingram's journey is a testament to the versatility of a pharmacy career, from starting as a pharmacy assistant at 16, through university studies, leading teams in hospital pharmacy, and now shaping the future of healthcare technology as Enterprise Customer Success Manager at Healthengine.

While pursuing a Bachelor of Pharmacy at the University of Sydney, Ingram faced challenges that tested her confidence. However, through resilience, determination, and a mindset shift, she graduated with Honours, earned a place on the Dean's List, and was recognised as Pharmacy Student of the Year.

Her career has since expanded into diverse and impactful roles, including working in community and hospital pharmacy, and leading the Outpatient Pharmacy Department at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

She later transitioned into industry at AbbVie before stepping into the dynamic world of HealthTech.

"Your career is your own, it's what you make it," Ingram shared. Listen to the podcast [HERE](#).

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### Amanda Stoker to be Guild guest

THE Queensland branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced that the Hon Amanda Stoker, Queensland Assistant Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training, will be the guest speaker for its 2025 International Women's Day Breakfast on Wed 05 Mar.

More than 150 community pharmacists and pharmacy industry representatives will meet to address this year's IWD campaign theme, #AccelerateAction.

"As an industry made up of 70% women, International Women's Day holds great importance to The Guild and to the community pharmacy industry as a whole," said Chris Owen, President of the Guild's Queensland branch.

For more information and to book tickets, click [HERE](#).

## Free digital mental health roll out

THE Department of Health and Ageing has awarded SANE Australia \$27.3 million over three years for the national roll out of Australia's first digital psychosocial recovery program for adults experiencing complex mental illness and trauma.

The first of its kind in the world, the program represents "an enormous step forward" when it comes to the accessibility of mental health and disability support services, promising to improve mental health outcomes and alleviate pressure on the primary health system.

SANE's programs offer 1:1 personalised counselling, groups sessions, peer support and 24/7 community connection for free via any internet-enabled device.

They offer similar outcomes to traditional services, but cost less to deliver and have other benefits, including reducing geographical and cultural barriers for those seeking help.

As well as supporting those with

complex mental health needs and their families and carers, SANE also provides mental health support to people with intellectual disability, autism or acquired brain injury.

"There's around five million Australians living with complex mental health needs and at least 500,000 missing out on support services that could dramatically change the trajectory of their life," said SANE CEO Rachel Green.

"The need to find new ways of supporting this community has never been greater, and there's strong evidence that digital mental health support services are just as effective as face-to-face services, more economical and rapidly scalable to overcome geographic or workforce challenges," Green said.

SANE developed and piloted a guided recovery program for those with complex needs in collaboration with the lived experience community.

"Our services have now grown to encompass a stepped digital

support offering, proven by independent evaluation to reduce symptom domination, improve quality of life, and importantly, empower individuals to have the knowledge, skills and confidence to build their own recovery journey," Green said.

"This historic investment in making our free services available nationally is testament to the willingness of this government to explore new mental health support pathways and actively reverse the inequality in service access that this community has experienced for so long," Green concluded.

SANE's support services are delivered by specialist mental health workers and are accessible via any internet-enabled device, or by telephone for those without internet access.

The program is currently available in most parts of Australia and will be made nationally available from Jul 2025.

Learn more [HERE](#). KB

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Dive into our latest podcast episode featuring **Katelyn Ingram**, Pharmacist and Enterprise Customer Success Manager at Healthengine, titled "The Versatility of a Pharmacy Career".

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## Dispensary Corner

**INAUGURATION** Day for US President Donald Trump was understandably a busy one, and amid a slew of executive orders signed that day, the new President may have accidentally made every American female.

Perhaps the most controversial of all the orders was the country's new legal recognition that there are only two genders - male and female - with explicit definitions of each in terms of their application.

According to *Mashable*, deep in the wording of the 'Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government' order, it suggests sex is assigned at conception, whereas a human fetus' sex organs are identical at the time - in that they have none.

Irrespective of their chromosome pattern, which is present at conception, the Y link begins to express itself at around six or seven weeks by either developing testes to become a male, or not, leading to the birth of a female.

So as Trump's executive order states that due to sex being assigned at conception, it could be interpreted that all of them are in fact female.

It's a testament to the old adage, "read before you sign".

Then there are intersex people, making up 1.7% of the population, whose chromosomes don't fall within the XX or XY boundaries.

These inconsistencies are yet to be formally defined, however legal challenges are underway.

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email [newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au)

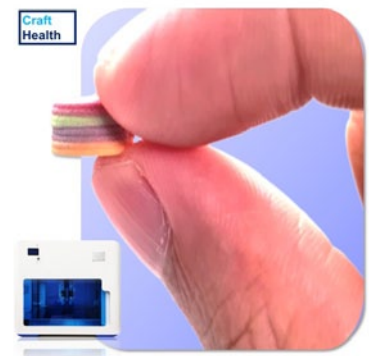
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