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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a front cover from Corporate Financial Services.

Pharmacy finance

CORPORATE Financial Services can assist with all your pharmacy finance requirements, whether for property, equipment, vehicles or other business assets.

With decades of experience in pharmacy, Corporate Financial Services knows the industry well, and in addition to finance and business consulting it can help pharmacists who are looking to buy or sell a business.

Richard Gorman, Michael Clark, Michelle Ewens and Michelle Ivanov are your go-to pharmacy business team.

For contact details and more info, see the front cover.

Calls for medicines shortage forum

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is supporting a call from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) for a medicine shortage forum to improve coordination and communication about disruptions to the supply of crucial medicine.

The AMA's proposal is outlined in its submission to the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) proposed changes to reporting requirements for medicine shortages and discontinuations.

The current approach to managing medicine shortages is too short term and reactive, said the National President of the Pharmacy Guild, Trent Twomey.

"It doesn't address the root cause of shortages, and patients continue to suffer," Twomey said.

"Information sharing and greater awareness of existing and forecasted supply disruptions is crucial to making sure patients have the medicine they need."

Ongoing shortages mean community pharmacists continue

to struggle to provide patients with the medicines they need, including crucial medicines for diabetes, menopause and mental health.

The Guild says the Government needs to take a proactive approach to combat medicine shortages and has been calling on the Government to reinstate the Medicine Shortage Working Party formed in response to medicine shortages during COVID but has since disbanded.

AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said a dedicated forum could provide ongoing advice on upcoming shortages and solutions, and significantly improve communication to doctors, patients and all other relevant stakeholders.

"The TGA does a good job of managing medicine shortages and discontinuations, which we know can be very unpredictable, but there is room for improvement, and the TGA has recognised this.

"One issue that persists is the challenge of timely, accurate

and consistent communication regarding medicine shortages.

"These shortages affect so many people in our community, including doctors, pharmacists and crucially, patients," Dr McMullen said.

The AMA pointed out that a dedicated forum, consisting of key groups representing medicine, pharmacy, wholesalers and sponsors, could replace the ad-hoc action groups that are normally formed in response to specific shortages.

"Medicine shortages and other disruptions have a profound effect on the community and inadequate communication can result in additional costs for patients, for whom there is often little transparency or forewarning," Dr McMullen said.

"We appreciate the nature of medicine shortages are unpredictable, but this is about giving us the best possible chance to respond to supply disruptions, which remain prevalent in the post-COVID era." KB

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Alcon

Walgreens' role in US opioid crisis

THE US Department of Justice has filed a lawsuit in Illinois against pharmacy giant Walgreens, accusing it of systematically pushing pharmacists to fill opioid prescriptions with "obvious red flags" quickly, helping drive unnecessary deaths and the opioid crisis.

In doing so, Walgreens management is said to have ignored its own pharmacists, internal data, and legal obligations around prescribed controlled substances to fill orders fast.

The suit, filed last week, alleges that between 2012 and the present, Walgreens "knowingly filled millions of prescriptions for controlled substances that lacked a legitimate medical purpose".

"This lawsuit seeks to hold Walgreens accountable for the many years that it failed to meet its obligations when dispensing dangerous opioids and other drugs," Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brian Boynton, head of the Justice Department's Civil Division, said in a statement.

"These practices allowed millions of opioid pills and other controlled substances to flow illegally out of Walgreens stores," he added.

In some cases, "patients died after overdosing on opioids shortly after filling unlawful prescriptions at Walgreens", the Justice Department said.

Similar suits in Baltimore and Philadelphia resulted in Walgreens settling, with a suit in Ohio pending.



Twomey on the year ahead

NATIONAL President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Trent Twomey, spoke to *Pharmacy Daily* about the highlights of 2024 and what he considers the coming year will look like for the industry.

Noting that cost-of-living pressures have continued to bite, Twomey has seen the toll it has taken on patients at his own pharmacy.

"I'm pleased that we secured the 8th Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA) to give everyone certainty for the future," Twomey told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"It balanced affordable medicines for patients, while ensuring a vibrant and growing community pharmacy industry, together with ameliorating some of the damage of 60-day dispensing."

A series of roadshows across the country last year with chief 8CPA negotiator and National Vice President, Anthony Tassone, resulted in face-to-face meetings with over a thousand members.

They discussed the current and future state of the industry, examined the impact of the 8CPA, and also encouraged pharmacists to explore what full scope of practice announcements will mean for them.

"We want community pharmacists across Australia to seize this opportunity," said Twomey.

"Expanding the range of services provided under scope of practice reforms can benefit your community, your pharmacy and your patients."

A priority point for the Guild is working with state governments to bring about greater consistency.

"Ultimately, we would like other states to see the positive impact of these changes in places like Queensland and commit to all 22 conditions being available regardless of state borders," Twomey said.

Pointing to Guild research showing that 82% of Australians trust their pharmacist to provide health advice for common, non-complex conditions, Twomey is keen to make the most of this trust by building the number of services available via community pharmacy to benefit local communities -



especially those in rural, regional and remote areas.

"This change strengthens the role of community pharmacists in providing primary healthcare and allows them to take a leading role in patient treatment, and see a greater variety of patient conditions.

"We've seen it improve job satisfaction, and it is good news for patients and primary healthcare providers who are struggling to manage existing patient demand."

Twomey said the Guild will soon launch a range of resources for community pharmacists to support them to make the change.

"This will include example consulting room designs and layout best practice to make the transition as straightforward as possible."

Full scope of practice and the Doctor of Pharmacy qualification point to exciting opportunities for the next generation of pharmacists and pharmacy students.

"Graduates of these programs will be able to use their enhanced clinical training to offer more comprehensive care, including managing complex medication, health screenings and managing chronic diseases.

"It opens a wider range of career opportunities and brings Australia into line with the qualifications available in other countries like the UK and Canada.

"It will be transformational for students, our sector and, most importantly, our patients."

Check out the full interview in *Pharmacy Daily's 2024 Year in Review* special report [HERE](#). KB

Are you cyber secure?

NAB Health will be hosting a free Cyber Security Awareness Webinar on Thu 06 Mar from 6pm AEDT.

Aimed at health professionals, the 60-minute CPD-accredited event will provide a comprehensive overview of today's cyber security threat landscape, including the different ways in which criminals are targeting individuals and businesses.

NAB will also provide practical advice on how you and your healthcare business can stay safe.

Tessa Bowles, NAB Security Advisory and Awareness Senior Consultant, will cover the cyber security environment, ransomware, social engineering, remote access scams, business email compromise and safeguards.

Learn more and register [HERE](#).

Phebra announces new sales lead

AUSTRALIAN pharmaceutical firm Phebra has announced the appointment of highly experienced pharmaceutical marketing executive Sarah Elliott to the newly created role of Chief Marketing and Sales Officer, ANZ.

With a career spanning over 25 years, Elliott has a breadth of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, working in leadership roles at CSL, Mayne Pharma and Roche.

"I am incredibly excited to be joining Phebra, a truly innovative Australian pharmaceutical company with domestic development and manufacturing capability strategies to grow its portfolio," Elliot said, adding that she is inspired by Phebra's goal of achieving better outcomes for Australian patients by providing them with critical medicines.

Dispensary Corner

A UK man with a penchant for marathoning was shocked to learn that what he thought was a broken toe was actually stage four kidney disease.

With a foot that he described as having ballooned to four times its usual size, and in excruciating pain, Niven Hopkins, 27, managed to limp to a doctor who diagnosed him with gout.

A few days later he received a 5am phone call telling him to rush to hospital as tests showed his kidneys were failing.

Tests showed his kidneys only functioned at around 15%, and he is currently waiting for a kidney transplant.

While it's not certain what caused Hopkins' condition, doctors suggested he may have eaten a diet which was too high in protein, which he denies.

Dietitians have told him to cut out dark-coloured fizzy drinks and red meat, and cut down on salt.

Now, he's waiting for a pre-transplant assessment so he can be matched to a donor in the hopes he can avoid starting hours-long dialysis sessions each week.

Ironically, the keen runner had already signed up to complete the 2025 London Marathon in aid of charity Kidney Care UK before his diagnosis.

Hopkins had decided to raise money for the charity after seeing his mum, Susan, 60, go through her own struggles with her kidney and two transplants.

The good news is that he has already raised more than £3,000 for the charity.

LTR Pharma partners with Symbion

LTR Pharma has signed a national pharmacy distribution agreement with Symbion for its erectile dysfunction medication, Spontan.

The non-exclusive agreement, which commences on 01 Mar 2025, enables LTR Pharma to leverage Symbion's extensive network of over 3,900 pharmacies across the country, making use of its warehousing, inventory functions and distribution services.

LTA Pharma says the collaboration will play a vital role in supporting the early access scheme they will use and sets a new foundation for Spontan's commercial launch following the completion of the regulatory approval process.

The product is currently available for prescription to eligible patients under the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) special

access scheme.

Spontan utilises intranasal delivery technology of vardenafil HCL, a PDE5 inhibitor, allowing for rapid drug absorption and action within 10 minutes.

"Partnering with Symbion is a pivotal step in building our commercial infrastructure.

"Symbion's extensive distribution network and expertise will ensure seamless access to Spontan across Australia," said LTA Pharma Chairman Lee Rodne.

"This agreement underscores our commitment to collaboration



with industry leaders to establish a reliable supply chain, support the TGA's early access program, and prepare for Spontan's anticipated commercial launch.

"Together, we are ensuring the highest standards of pharmaceutical handling and service delivery." KB

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au

Revive Tears - PBS listed

Revive Tears lubricant eye drops provide long lasting and soothing relief against burning, irritation and discomfort due to dry eye.

The product moisturises, comforts and refreshes dry, tired and strained eyes. Revive Tears helps lubricate, hydrate & protect dry eyes.

Suitable for use with contact lenses.

Contains hypromellose 3mg/g.

Supplier: Available from Symbion, Sigma & API.

RRP: \$4.32 (available in 10ml packs).

Website: [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

