

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of industry news, plus a full page from **Chemsave**.

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AI preventive health gets \$15m

AUSTRALIAN healthtech company Everlab today announced it has secured a historic \$15 million in seed funding to further develop its prevention-focused AI-powered health platform.

IPA outlines community-first approach

OVER 100 pharmacists from around the country gathered in Sydney yesterday for the start of the Independent Pharmacies Australia (IPA) Pharmacist Academy, a new education conference designed to equip pharmacists with advanced clinical, business and leadership skills to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

Steven Kastrinakis (**pictured**), IPA Managing Director and founder, kicked off proceedings, outlining the strategy behind IPA's aim to grow its network of 1,050 stores to 1,200 over the next year.

IPA canvassed its members about what they considered important, with trading terms coming out at number one, followed by operational support, then training.

The inaugural IPA Pharmacist Academy, as well as a new learning platform to be launched shortly, are key to this.

"IPA is about making sure that we give you what you want, and you

have told us that you don't want the one-size-fits-all approach," Kastrinakis said.

"Our priorities to you are really simple: it's going to be around community and the way that we're going to help you as IPA.

"Our role is to make sure that we put community first, and how we do that is to have a hyperlocal campaign that helps identify you in your local community."

IPA branding or co-branding of store signage, as seen at the IPA-branded pharmacy in Broadbeach, Qld (**PD** 27 Mar) will be part of that strategy.

Sustainable terms of business and value; ease of doing business; and disruptive innovation were other priorities.

"Under the motto 'Here for good', we're not only going to talk to you, but we're going to talk *through* you to your patients," Kastrinakis said.

"And that's going to be the difference with IPA."

Kastrinakis was followed by IPA



co-founder Michael Flannery, who spoke about 'disruptive innovation' in the IPA fold, including Brad Butt's Men's Health Downunder pharmacy clinic and Jack Buckley, 'the flying pharmacist'.

Flannery urged attendees to look for opportunities to drive change, whether big or small.

Kastrinakis concurred, saying, "When I asked the first guy that I worked for where I can make an impact as a pharmacist, he said 'turn up, be present and have a presence'."

IPA Pharmacist Academy concludes tomorrow. **KB**

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Dispensary Corner

ROBOCOP may soon move from the science fiction section to a documentary, if you look at some of the ingenious creations modern AI tech is spawning.

Australia's first dedicated AI and robotics innovation challenge saw Sydney-based medtech firm Inneurva develop a robotic skin that can sense pressure, temperature and gestural recognition using embedded AI technology.

The company is effectively giving robots the sense of touch, and is now trying to catch the attention of AI investors and developers in the US to push the concept.

"With Robotic AI Skin, robots can feel what they touch and respond accordingly, whether it's identifying a person, checking body temperature, or assessing the ripeness of fruit," said Inneurva chief Tass Paritt.

The Robotic AI Skin is being backed by the CSIRO and the University of Sydney, with early-stage funding also received from Microsoft's Startup Hub.

Applications for the tech could include using synthetic data to teach robots to monitor human health indicators during periods of interaction or assessment.

A sensor patch is applied to robotic grips to allow machines to recognise who is touching them and to learn and adapt to the meaning of interactions.

Future plans for the tech could include custom development for medtech or assistance robots to carry out a specific range of tasks for humans to help them in their daily lives.

WA pilot applications open

PHARMACISTS across Western Australia can now apply to enrol in the state's Enhanced Access Community Pharmacy Pilot to train and provide a wider range of treatment for everyday conditions.

Training for successful applicants is now set to begin in Sep and will be delivered through Graduate Certificate Programs at accredited universities (**PD** 21 Jul).

Once qualified, community pharmacists graduating from the program will be authorised to diagnose and treat common ailments such as ear infections, acne and asthma - taking pressure off GPs and hospitals (**PD** 20 Jun).

The initiative builds further on existing programs authorising trained pharmacists to diagnose and treat uncomplicated urinary tract infections, resupply oral contraceptive pills, and provide pharmacist-administered vaccines.

Training costs for some pharmacists will be subsidised by the Government as part of a \$1.26 million investment provided in the recent WA Budget.

Some eligible pharmacists operating in rural and remote areas may also earn a higher subsidy.

Western Australia Health Minister Meredith Hammat (**pictured**) said the practical initiative will help more WA residents to access diagnosis and treatment for a wider range of common conditions.

"By enhancing the skills of community pharmacists, we are reducing pressure on hospitals and GPs while giving patients safe, effective care options closer to home," Minister Hammat said.

"Through our State Government-funded subsidy, we're strongly encouraging rural and remote pharmacists to apply for the training, to boost access to care



right across our vast state.

"The pilot reflects our commitment to making the most of our highly trained pharmacy workforce and strengthening care in the community."

The Enhanced Access Community Pharmacy Pilot remains on track to begin late next year on completion of the training program.

Pharmacists employed at a community pharmacy can check their eligibility for the course **HERE**.

The milestone has been welcomed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, with WA President Kristian Ray saying utilising the skills of pharmacists is a great outcome for patients.

"As medicines experts and highly accessible healthcare professionals, pharmacists are uniquely placed to improve access to care when and where it's needed most," Ray said. **ML**

New IBD dietary guidelines released

THE European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO), the world's leading authority on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), has published its first Consensus Guidelines on the dietary management of IBD, providing evidence-based practical recommendations on how diet should be used to support people living with IBD.

"These international Consensus Guidelines recommend that all people with inflammatory bowel disease have access to a dietitian," said Associate Professor Emma Halmos of Monash University, who helped lead their development.

The guidelines note that dietitians in settings where IBD patients are managed, including pharmacies, can deliver evidence-based dietary therapy.

If no specific dietary intervention is indicated, IBD patients should follow healthy eating guidelines, which are associated with a reduced risk of developing the condition.

The IBD guidelines are **HERE**.

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