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RIPAA: More support needed in remote areas

THE Remote and Isolated Pharmacist Association Australia (RIPAA) has welcomed the WA Government's initiative to subsidise the cost of training for expanded scope of practice, in particular the higher subsidy offered to rural pharmacists in MM3-7 (**PD** 22 Jul).

However, concerns remain that underserved rural and remote areas will likely lag behind cities and larger regional centres in terms of pharmacist prescribing services and broader scope of practice.

"It's the small towns and remote areas where pharmacist prescribing and other expanded pharmacy services are most desperately needed, given the shortage of GPs and other healthcare services," said

a spokesperson for RIPAA.

In the WA town of Northampton, the local pharmacy will be the sole permanent healthcare provider available to the community after it loses its only GP on 31 Jul.

However, Joanne Loftus, the local pharmacist who has served the community for the past 20 years, told RIPAA she is unsure whether she will be able to take on the training, due to costs and the constraints of running the town's only pharmacy.

Loftus is also concerned that her patients may not be able to afford the services, as they are not covered by Medicare.

For pharmacist scope of practice to be successful in towns like Northampton, RIPAA said governments must ensure that there are appropriate supports in place for the pharmacies outside major hubs, especially the remote and isolated sole operators in MM5-7, to provide these services. "This includes training

subsidies but also appropriate funding to deliver the services in disadvantaged areas where most patients are concessional and will struggle to afford the out-of-pocket costs of user-pays healthcare services," RIPAA said. **KB**

Today's issue of **PD**

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

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Dispensary Corner

IF YOU are looking for an excuse to eat more peanut butter (and let's be honest, who isn't?), look no further - especially if you have sleeping problems.

A doctor in the US made waves on TikTok when he suggested that a spoonful of peanut butter before bed can help you sleep better throughout the night.

This is because it contains tryptophan - an amino acid vital for the production of serotonin - "which can have a calming effect on your brain", explained Dr Kunal Sood.

The tasty spread is also high in healthy fats, which prevent blood sugar level spikes that can cause you to wake up during the night.

"Lastly, peanut butter also contains magnesium which has been shown to relax you and improve sleep quality," Dr Sood added.

After posting the video, TikTok users commented that the tip has indeed proven helpful (and delicious, we're sure).

One user said: "I have trouble sleeping almost every night - peanut butter has helped me a lot", and another commented: "Wow okay good reason to eat peanut butter."

But one lamented: "Dammit, I'm allergic to peanuts."



Health info trust fragmenting

INSTITUTIONS and experts are no longer the sole gatekeepers of health information, and peers, influencers and social platforms now play a central role in shaping health behaviours, according to new data launched this week from the 2025 *Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust and Health in Australia*.

The global survey of 16,000 people, including 1,000 from Australia, also reported that most people agreed that to be seen as a legitimate health expert, personal relevance, relatability and prior helpful advice are now considered almost as important as academic credentials.

Among Australians aged 18-34, 43% believed that those who have done their own research are just as knowledgeable as doctors on most health matters - an 11-point rise from last year.

They are also more likely to be influenced by their peers when making health-related decisions, with 37% disregarding medical advice from a healthcare professional in favour of advice from friends and family or social

media content.

However, despite being highly engaged, confident consumers of health information, 52% of younger people say they have regretted a health decision made due to misinformation, with a third of those citing their own doctor as a top source of that misinformation.

While trust in pharmacies globally remains high at 77% - second only to hospitals among major health institutions - the sentiment more generally indicates a breakdown in frontline trust.

"To deliver better outcomes for patients and rebuild confidence in the health ecosystem, we need stronger collaboration across the board," said Lisa Robins, CEO of Patients Australia.

"That means engaging meaningfully with what patients have to say, showing up where they're seeking support - even when it's outside the traditional channels we're used to - and building partnerships with them that improve access to trustworthy information, evidence-based treatment, and high-quality care," Robbins concluded. *KB*

Pharmacy market sentiment high

PHARMACY business brokers Attain have reported that buyer demand for pharmacies has increased significantly in the most recent round of its four-monthly survey.

Almost two-thirds (64.7%) of sampled pharmacists and current pharmacy owners said they are looking to buy - up from 48% in the last survey.

The survey of 58 pharmacists also found that likely supply of pharmacies on the market is well down, with only one in five

(21.2%) owners in the sample looking to sell a pharmacy within the next five years.

Almost two-thirds of the sample (64.7%) predicted that pharmacy business prices will increase over the next 12 months, while 27.5% believed they will stay flat.

"It will be interesting to see how this plays out in the market, but the data suggests it will be a seller's market for pharmacy business sales in the immediate future," said Attain Director Natalie Sirriani.

Blister pack postal recycling



HEALTHCARE manufacturer Haleon and Pharmacycycle have partnered to develop a household blister pack recycling program.

Pharmacycycle is Australia's only end-to-end recycling program for blister pack waste and already offers a recycling service through collection bins in almost 1,000 pharmacies nationwide (*PD* 24 Feb).

The new partnership means that people can order a satchel from Haleon, fill it with empty blister packs from any brand, and mail it using the pre-paid postage label provided.

Pharmacycycle will then process the blister packs, giving the plastic and aluminium materials a second life and helping to reduce long-term waste.

Haleon and Pharmacycycle will give away free satchels to the first 3,000 people who register their interest, after which Haleon said it "intends to continue and expand this program into the future".

Haleon Marketing Director Nagraj Iyer said the partnership "reflects a shared goal to make sustainability more accessible and achievable, especially for those in rural and remote communities".

"It helps address a long-standing gap by offering a simple, household solution for blister pack recycling," Iyer said. Order the satchel **HERE**.

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