

## Today's issue of PD

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

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## \$25 scripts a step closer

**THE** Federal Government has introduced legislation to Parliament this week to reduce the cost of PBS prescriptions.

The policy, announced earlier this year (**PD** 20 Mar), will see the co-payment for PBS prescriptions reduced to a maximum of \$25 from 01 Jan 2026, down from \$31.60.

"This is great news for the 20 million Australians without a concession card, who will save a combined \$689 million in the next four years," said Guild National President, Professor Trent Twomey.

## Med safety initiative for intellectual disability

**THE** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has announced a new initiative to improve medicine safety and health outcomes for people with intellectual disability.

The project aims to empower people with intellectual disability to feel confident, informed and in control of their medicines, in line with PSA's mission to lead national efforts "to improve medicine safety for all Australians, ensuring no one is left behind".

According to the PSA, Australians with intellectual disability face serious and persistent health inequities, including a 4.5-fold higher risk of preventable hospitalisations and more than twice the rate of avoidable deaths.

This initiative seeks to close that gap by improving health literacy; medicine safety; and access to pharmacist-led services such as medication reviews, dose administration aids, prescribing, and injectable medicines.

The initiative is a partnership with the South Australian Council on Intellectual Disability (SACID) and the University of Newcastle (UoN), supported by the 2025 Innovation Seed Funding Grants from the National Centre of

Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health.

As part of the project, PSA will work alongside SACID and people with intellectual disability to co-design interactive workshops and 'Easy Read' resources that build understanding of safe medicine use and highlight how pharmacists can support individual health needs.

"Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to support Australians with intellectual disability through personalised, accessible, and inclusive care," PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim said.

"This initiative builds on our *Medicine Safety: Disability Care* report and reaffirms PSA's commitment to making healthcare more inclusive, accessible, and safe for all Australians.

"By bringing together lived experience, clinical expertise, and research, this collaboration is a powerful step toward reducing health inequities and delivering better, safer care for a community that has long been overlooked."

SACID Executive Director Felicity Crowther added: "Accessible health information is key to improving health outcomes for people with intellectual disability.

"It is also important for people with intellectual disability to understand the role their pharmacist can have in supporting their health.

"SACID is pleased to have the opportunity to work alongside PSA and UoN on this new project," Crowther concluded.

The project is currently in development, with delivery expected to commence in 2026.

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## Dispensary Corner

**THERE** is a fresh way to *beet* heart disease - if you can stomach it.

A new study has found that drinking two shots of beetroot juice a day could help to lower blood pressure - a leading cause of heart disease and stroke.

Researchers at the University of Exeter in England discovered that people in their 70s who added the red juice to their daily diet for two weeks saw their originally high blood pressure drop to within the healthy range.

The study also found that the beet shots, which are rich in nitrate, had a positive effect on younger people too, boosting levels of healthy bacteria in the mouth in under-30s.

According to the researchers, nitrate-rich vegetables like beetroot may help increase the levels of beneficial bacteria in the mouth and gut, which are believed to be helpful in clearing harmful cholesterol from the blood, lowering blood pressure.

"We know that a nitrate-rich diet has health benefits and older people produce less of their own nitric oxide as they age," said study lead, Professor Anni Vanhatalo.

"Encouraging older adults to consume more nitrate-rich vegetables could have significant long-term health benefits," she added.



## Pharmacist-initiated menopause clinic

**INITIATIVES** around menopause management are firmly in the spotlight this year, with millions of dollars allocated in federal budget spending and the listing of new HRT treatments on the PBS (**PD** 10 Feb).

Priceline has developed its Anything Menopause program, set to launch in Sep (**PD** 29 May), and other major pharmacy groups have told **Pharmacy Daily** they are planning to launch their own menopause programs in the near future.

Helping people right now, however, is Bo Youn Kim (**pictured**), a clinical pharmacist from Perth, who has established a private menopause consultancy service called EmpowHer Menopause.

As well as running face-to-face clinics two days a week, she also provides a telehealth consultations, and with links to clinicians associated with menopause and healthy ageing peak body, the Australasian Menopause Society (AMS), now helps women around the country.

Kim spoke to **Pharmacy Daily** about what inspired the initiative.

"I was working as a hospital pharmacist, and experienced menopause symptoms at the relatively young age of 41," Kim said.

She described a period of nine months of seeing several doctors, being misdiagnosed, having requests for HRT denied, and being given hormonal contraceptives to manage some symptoms.

Finally, after seeing an AMS-listed doctor, she was prescribed HRT, and said she felt "so much better".

But it was patients she saw in the course of her work at Fremantle Hospital, women experiencing debilitating menopausal symptoms who she felt could potentially benefit from HRT, that convinced Kim she had to do something.

Doctors are often reluctant to prescribe HRT, especially in a hospital setting, she explained.

And while there are specialist menopause clinics and GPs with a special interest in menopause popping up, services in Perth are booked out for many months ahead and often not taking new patients.

The fee for the first appointment is also quite high - often in the order of \$300 to \$400.

"It's a great service for women because they go through everything thoroughly, and treat the patient holistically," Kim said.

"But I felt that was just too long for women to wait, and too expensive, and thinking about how I could help these people, I decided to set up my own private clinic.

"I could do the consultation, I could assess them and then I could refer the patient to GPs and nurse practitioners who were happy to receive my referral."

Mindful of the many products attempting to cash in on the menopause market, Kim sticks to an evidence-based approach to menopause symptom management and healthy ageing, in line with the latest AMS information.

Apart from discussing HRT, she explains how to get an adequate



protein intake, talks about the importance of exercise, and may also recommend vitamin D and magnesium supplements.

Pharmacists who are interested in learning more about how to help patients manage menopause should join the Australian GP-led initiative **Healthy Hormones**, which provides professional education around menopause, Kim suggested.

She also pointed to the International Menopause Society, which has resources in multiple languages that pharmacists can print out and provide to patients.

When asked if she would recommend other pharmacists start a menopause clinic, the answer was an unequivocal yes - "the more the merrier". **KB**

## New planet-friendly propellants on way

**THE** Europeans Medicines Agency (EMA) has recommended a change in the composition of Trixeo Aerosphere and Riltrava Aerosphere (budesonide, glycopyrronium, formoterol fumarate dihydrate) inhaled medicines used to treat COPD.

The existing gas propellant has been replaced with a low global warming potential (GWP) alternative.

The new low GWP alternative propellant has a 1,000-fold reduction in global warming potential and has similar safety and efficacy as the current gas.

High GWP gases, including hydrofluorocarbon gases used in other inhaled medicines for treating respiratory diseases, are being phased out for environmental reasons, in line with current EU policies.





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