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PSA releases 2025 election platform

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is calling on political parties and independents to commit to healthcare reforms that unlock the full potential of pharmacists and improve health outcomes for all Australians in its 2025 federal election platform.

Released yesterday, the PSA's election platform outlines tangible steps toward better integrating pharmacists into primary care, reducing medicine-related harm, and ensuring all Australians can access safe, timely healthcare when and where they need it.

Key priorities include funding measures to enhance the professional practice of pharmacists, as committed to by government, and training programs to upskill pharmacists to practice at their full scope.

It also focuses on allowing pharmacists to prescribe PBS medicines within their scope of practice; and implementing a national incident logging and

pharmacovigilance system to reduce medicine-related harm.

To increase medicine safety and improve access to services among particular population groups, the PSA urges removing service provider caps for Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs); increasing remuneration for Aged Care Onsite Pharmacists; embedding pharmacists in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services to close the gap in medicine safety and access; and doubling Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) funding to support more pharmacists in general practice, improving chronic disease management.

PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim urged political leaders to seize this "once-in-a-generation" opportunity to reform the health system for the better.

"Australia's healthcare system is facing growing pressure, with an ageing population and increasingly complex health needs.

"Pharmacists are a critical, yet underutilised, part of the solution," A/Prof Sim said.

"Several government reviews and reports have made recommendations to better utilise pharmacists to improve patient care and safer use of medicines.

"Now is the time for action - to translate these recommendations into tangible reform, starting with further investment in the pharmacist workforce."

A/Prof Sim emphasised that the PSA's platform is not just a wish-list, but a "blueprint for real, achievable reform", and post-election, the PSA is "ready to work with government to make changes that ensure pharmacists can deliver the best possible care to their patients".

"Pharmacists are stepping up to meet our country's growing healthcare challenges," she said.

"Now is the time for stakeholders from across the political spectrum to support us."

The platform is available [HERE](#). *KB*



Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **Dispense Assist**.

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AI mental health

SINGAPOREAN-FOUNDED

Intellect, Asia's fastest-growing mental health platform, has been named as one of *Fast Company's* top 10 innovative companies in the Asia-Pacific region for expanding mental health care.

Intellect has six clinics in Singapore, which blend virtual and face-to-face care, and plans to open clinics in Australia, Hong Kong and Japan over the next year.

In addition to the clinics, Intellect offers AI-enabled virtual care and tele-consultations via its digital platform, with services including counselling, clinical therapy and medicine management, as well as screening assessments for mental health disorders.

Intellect currently serves four million people in 60 countries, and hopes to transform mental healthcare across the region.

Parental barriers to children's flu vax

A NEW Australia-wide survey has revealed the reasons why some parents do not intend to vaccinate their children against influenza, with pharmacists well placed to address key barriers.

The research also offers important insights into the concerning decline in flu vaccination since the onset of the COVID pandemic (PD 05 Mar).

Researchers from the National Vaccination Insights project conducted a national survey of 2,000 parents to understand the barriers to the uptake of flu vaccines among kids under five.

The researchers calculated how common access barriers (practical difficulties) and acceptance barriers (thoughts, feelings and social influences) were among parents who plan to vaccinate their child versus those who do not.

"The barrier of not prioritising childhood flu vaccination over other things represented the largest difference between not-intending and intending parents," said Dr Kasia Bolsewicz, Research

Fellow at the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS).

"This can be a result of parents choosing not to prioritise, or being unable to prioritise due to practical challenges, such as difficulty booking flu vaccination appointments, managing competing priorities, organising transport to the clinic and taking time off work," Dr Bolsewicz added.

Just over half of parents (54.3%) who did not intend to vaccinate their child said they would not feel guilty if their child got the flu, compared with only 7.5% of intending parents.

The researchers said that this signals the need for renewed awareness that infants and children under five years of age have a higher risk of flu-related complications, hospitalisation and morbidity than older children.

"Perennial strategies are required to move this needle," Dr Maryke Steffens, Research Fellow at NCIRS.

"Childhood flu vaccination needs to be more accessible for parents with limited time and resources.

"Parents also need up-to-date information about the importance of annual flu vaccinations and the risk of severe flu illness (even in healthy children), and flu vaccine safety and effectiveness data need to be shared more widely.

"Healthcare workers also require support to discuss and recommend flu vaccination opportunistically, not just during scheduled vaccination appointments," emphasised Dr Steffens.

At present, only pharmacists in

Queensland and South Australia can vaccinate children under five, but pharmacists in other states can inform parents about the importance of flu vaccination and risks of a severe case of flu.

The research is available [HERE](#). KB



Great to see you at APP2025!

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Dispensary Corner



YOU'VE heard of sneezing your head off, or at least sneezing yourself a stroke (*PD* 03 Mar), but what about sneezing your guts out?

This literally happened to a 63-year-old man, who sneezed out his intestines through a surgical wound.

The man had received surgery two weeks earlier to remove his bladder, with the incision sealed with staples, according to the case study published in the *American Journal of Medical Case Reports*.

Celebrating the removal of the staples with a non-hospital breakfast later that morning, the man let out a forceful sneeze while coughing, and reportedly felt a "wet" sensation and pain in his lower abdomen.

When he looked down, the report continued, he saw "several loops of pink bowel" sticking out of his surgical wounds.

Unsure what to do next, the man covered his intestines with his shirt and debated driving himself to hospital.

Happily, commonsense in the form of his wife prevailed, and an ambulance was called.

The man's bowels remained intact throughout all this and he was otherwise doing well by the time he arrived at the emergency room, where three surgeons worked to manoeuvre the intestines back into their usual position.

His recovery went smoothly and he was discharged six days later.

His final diagnosis was a case of evisceration, also known as disembowelment.

Managing vax risk: PDL's top 10 tips

WITH pharmacists able to administer a growing number of vaccines, risks are also increasing.

During a session at APP2025, Pharmaceutical Defence Limited (PDL) Professional Officers Kylie Neville and Simone Henriksen outlined some of the most common incidents and patient complaints, and provided risk management guidance to pharmacists.

In an analysis of incidents relating to vaccines, PDL reported that the most common related to vaccine selection, highlighting the importance of using open-ended questions to confirm the patient's identity and what vaccination they expect, as well as having good stock control practices, such as a well-organised fridge and barcode scanning.

Other incidents included using the wrong needle, children being able to reach into sharps containers, using expired vaccines, and having too long or too short an interval between doses.

The most common complaints from patients related to the pharmacist declining to supply a vaccine and dissatisfaction with service, which largely relate to whether the services a particular



pharmacist or pharmacy team are able to supply meet the patient's expectations; complaints about counselling or advice; and concerns about privacy or confidentiality.

PDL provided their top 10 tips for managing risk:

1. Check you have the right patient - ask for their full name and date of birth, and avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.

2. Check the vaccine expiry date on the individual packaging before administering it.

Slow-moving stock and poor stock control practices can lead to having expired stock in the fridge.

3. Scan check all dispensed items when stock arrives.

The Pharmacy Board of Australia strongly encourages pharmacists to use barcode scanners in the dispensing process.

Scan every product if you receive

a pack with multiple items - there may be an incorrect product in amongst others the pack.

4. Ask the patient which vaccine they are expecting to receive using an open-ended question.

5. Watch out for mg vs mL in labelled directions, especially for children's products and compounding solutions.

6. Use your clinical judgement - if a dose seems odd, double check it.

Use AMH or MIMS, and contact prescriber if something does not seem right.

Note your concerns before contacting the prescriber, and document the conversation with the prescriber.

7. Double check paediatric doses every time - and check the child's weight and the indication for which you are dispensing.

8. Manage dispensary staff work loads and ask for help when needed.

9. Look after your own health and mental health - the chances of error are greater when tired, stressed or hungry, so take breaks when needed.

10. Be familiar with relevant legislation and guidelines according to your jurisdiction and qualifications, and keep up to date.

Medical cannabis educator Saged teams up with Lauren Jackson

MEDICAL cannabis education platform, Saged, has launched an online learning module featuring basketball legend Lauren Jackson.

The case study looks at chronic pain management in sports medicine, equipping healthcare professionals with insights into medical cannabis as a treatment for impact-based sporting injuries and surgical recovery, as well as chronic conditions such

as endometriosis.

As a vocal advocate for medical cannabis in managing her own chronic pain after years of elite competition, Jackson provides a real-world perspective on the challenges faced by female athletes and the evolving role of medical cannabis in modern treatment protocols.

The CPD-accredited module addresses the pathophysiology

of common sporting injuries in female athletes and conventional management strategies; the potential benefits and limitations of medical cannabis and how it integrates with opioid use; the identification of suitable candidates for medical cannabis treatment; how to create treatment plans, and more.

For more information about Saged, click [HERE](#).

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