

# SYDNEY

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## Today's issue of PD

**Pharmacy Daily** today features three pages of news, plus a front cover wrap from **Direct Chemist Outlet**, and full pages from:

- **Chemist Discount Centre**
- **Therapeutic Guidelines**

## DCO in Sydney

**DIRECT** Chemist Outlet is coming to Sydney, and is inviting pharmacy owners to grow their business.

See **cover page** for more.

## Antibiotics update

**THERAPEUTIC** Guidelines has published a major update of its antibiotics guidelines for clinicians to support improved patient outcomes.

See **page five** for more.

## MedAdvisor buy

A **NON-BINDING** Letter of Intent has been received by MedAdvisor Solutions pitching an acquisition of its Australia and New Zealand division.

According to an ASX update, the company said the proposal is currently "commercial in confidence" but that directors will carry out due diligence.

MedAdvisor said the latest offer is for a "materially higher value" than what the current share price may imply.

The company said its ANZ division continues to perform strongly, with the latest results issued last month detailing record revenue of \$2.9 million.

## Call for greater asthma role



**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia marked World Asthma Day yesterday by calling on states and territories across the nation to allow community pharmacists to provide more treatment and support for people with the condition.

"Community pharmacists support those with asthma from their very first prescription when they share the proper inhalation technique and help with medication reviews," said Guild National President Professor Trent Twomey.

"In Queensland, and soon in the Northern Territory, community pharmacists can also provide asthma management plans, support patients to adjust their doses and make sure their asthma remains under control.

"Community pharmacists can - and must - play a bigger role in supporting those with asthma.

"State and territory governments need to unlock the healthcare potential of community pharmacy."

Asthma Australia CEO Kate Miranda pointed out that asthma is a chronic condition affecting nearly 2.8 million children and adults in Australia.

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## CWH rollout rolls on

**SIGMA** Healthcare is set to continue opening up to 30 new stores in Australia each year, the company revealed in its first trading update since Chemist Warehouse completed its reverse takeover of the group.

While exact figures were not revealed, Sigma's pre-tax earnings for the combined group increased by 36% for the nine months to the end of Mar.

The company said the results are consistent with what Chemist Warehouse reported for the first half (an EBIT of \$446.1 million), minus the costs of the merger.

The pharmacy giant expects to deliver double-digit sales growth, Chief Financial Officer Mark Davis explained at the Macquarie Australia Conference yesterday.

"The strong momentum has been continuing," he said.

"We have been seeing broadly consistent impacts in terms of trading conditions, still achieving double-digit sales growth.

"The GLP-1s [weight-loss drugs] are proving to be very popular," he added.

Davis also shared that, while Sigma is focused on its domestic rollout strategy, it will also continue expanding its international footprint.

"With the right management, people with asthma can control their condition," she said, noting that includes regular check-ups at the GP and working with their community pharmacist to help keep symptoms under control.

"In particular, we want to see a focus on the smarter use of oral steroids, to ensure complications and side effects are minimised," Miranda said.

"The lifetime toxic threshold for oral steroids is 1000mg, equivalent to just four standard doses.

"The more oral steroids you have had, the more likely you are to experience some side effects."

Miranda pointed out that with good asthma management, patients can prevent future asthma flare-ups and reduce reliance on oral steroids.

"One in nine Australians have asthma; more than 31,000 were hospitalised with the condition in 2022-23, with 474 people dying from asthma in 2023," she said.

"Good asthma management and prevention need to be prioritised urgently to help turn these numbers around," Miranda concluded. *KB*

## Join CDC franchise

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See details on **page four**.

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## Mental weather

**MENTAL** health conditions stemming from climate change and weather events are on the rise, according to a new report commissioned by Doctors for the Environment.

High temperatures, ongoing burning of fossil fuels and natural disasters currently account for 1.8% of mental and behavioural disorders in Australia, but this is expected to skyrocket to up to 49% in the next 25 years, leading to feelings of anxiety and grief.

The association is calling for the newly reelected Albanese Government to act fast and increase resources to meet the escalating need for mental health services following extreme weather events.

The report found almost half of Australians are expected to experience a mental illness at some point, with costs on the system already exceeding \$190 billion per year.

## Expert concern over “dire” flu vax rates

**INFECTIOUS** diseases and public health experts have warned of “dire” flu vaccination coverage, saying people are underestimating the severity of the disease.

“Vaccination coverage is consistently dire, and some people are being hospitalised or even dying from a disease that is preventable,” said Professor Julie Leask, from the University of Sydney, at a media briefing on the coming flu season.

Cost of vaccination has been cited as an issue, with calls for other states to follow the lead of WA and Queensland in providing free vaccination.

However, this does not appear to have had much effect on vaccination rates in Queensland, suggesting cost is not everything.

Professor Leask noted that vaccination rates are improved by services that remind people they are due for their shots.

“Healthcare workers need to remind people to get vaccinated when they attend for another

reason,” she added.

“We know that flu vaccination is a habit, and once you start that habit, you tend to continue with it,” she explained.

Professor Paul Griffin, Director of Infectious Diseases at Mater Health Services in Brisbane, pointed to flu vax myths and misconceptions that need to be addressed.

First was the idea that people can get the flu from the flu vaccine.

“The vaccine does not contain any live virus,” he said.

“Flu-like symptoms around the time of vaccination could be an immune response to the vaccine, a coincidental infection with a different virus or a flu infection, because it takes time for immunity to develop.”

He said people who have had the flu still need to be vaccinated because there are four types of flu and you can get more than one each season.

Other concerning beliefs are that people who are young and fit will

not be badly affected, and that it is just a “bad cold”.

“Severe disease does occur and not exclusively in those who are at highest risk,” he pointed out.

While it is difficult at this stage to predict the severity of upcoming flu season, Professor Patrick Reading, Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza, said they would have a better idea of it once they know what the main strains are.

He pointed out that the 2024-25 season was severe in the US, but this was not necessarily the case in other Northern Hemisphere countries, such as China and Europe.

For people who do get the flu, Professor Griffin said it is important to limit its spread by staying at home where possible, observe cough and sneeze etiquette and hand hygiene, and wear a mask - practices that were common during COVID but have unfortunately dropped off, despite the potential severity of flu infection. *KB*

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## Dispensary Corner

**SNAKES**, spiders, jellyfish... Australia is rich in venomous wildlife, providing no shortage of opportunities for health professionals to hone treatments.

However, doctors writing in the *Medical Journal of Australia* were initially stumped when a woman presented after being envenomated by a platypus.

Yes, one of the world's few venomous mammals got the better of a well-meaning rescuer, leaving her in severe pain with two puncture wounds.

Given the rarity of platypus in the wild, it's not surprising such incidents are also rare, with only two published cases prior to this.

The main symptoms are severe localised pain and swelling lasting several days.

While it may seem a reasonable course of action, clinicians warned against using treatment modalities typically used for other envenomations, such as pressure bandage immobilisation (PBI) and hot water immersion.

Good for spiders and snakes, PBI is unlikely to benefit victims of platypus envenomation because there's no evidence its venom spreads through the body in the same way as snake or spider venom, and it can cause rhabdomyolysis and compartment syndrome if incorrectly applied.

Similarly, there's no evidence the proteins in platypus venom are susceptible to hot water denaturing like jellyfish venom.

In the end, they recommended simple analgesics and a surgical washout of the wound.

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email [newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:newproducts@pharmacydaily.com.au)

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# EXTENSIVE ANTIBIOTIC GUIDELINES UPDATE 2025

**Designed by clinicians** for clinicians

An extensive multidisciplinary update to the Antibiotic guidelines has been released.  
Supporting the Australian healthcare community to deliver improved patient outcomes.

## The major update includes:

- 100+** Clinical expert contributors
- 200+** Clinical topics
- 1400+** Drug recommendations
- NEW** | Calculators  
| Images and diagrams  
| Patient information

