

Today's issue of PD

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GP waiting times

AROUND 15% of Australians waited up to an hour past their scheduled GP appointment time, a new Money.com.au study has revealed.

The survey of 1,000 Aussies found only 10% of respondents saw their GP within 10 minutes, while 36% waited up to 30 minutes.

Money.com.au GM of Health Insurance, Chris Whitelaw, said patients can help by booking a longer consultation if needed.

Refreshed Ministry welcomed

MARK Butler has been reappointed Minister for Health and Aged Care in a cabinet reshuffle yesterday, with the pharmacy sector welcoming his continuation in the role.

"The Guild and community pharmacy looks forward to working with Minister Butler and his team to continue delivering for all Australian patients," said National President Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Professor Trent Twomey.

Twomey pointed out that Butler had "worked hard to put patients at the heart of his work", particularly with the recent move to make medicine more affordable.

"Continuity will ensure the necessary reforms to healthcare, including expanding the range of services offered in pharmacy, can be taken forward at pace.

"There were a lot of reviews and recommendations in the first term - now is the time to put these into practice in partnership with industry, healthcare professionals and experts," Twomey said.

In other appointments, Rebecca White is now Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, replacing Ged Kearney; Emma McBride retained her role as Assistant

Regional support

IMPROVEMENTS are needed in the level of contraceptive care provided to teenagers in regional and rural areas, a new study from Monash University has found.

The study interviewed 18 GPs, who agreed higher rates of teenage pregnancy in their region were related to limited knowledge of and access to contraception, along with high costs and limited providers.

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Credentialing transition extended

THE Pharmacy Programs Administrator has extended transition arrangements for pharmacists delivering Medication Management Review (MMR) and Aged Care On-site Pharmacist (ACOP) services.

The MMR transition is extended to 31 Dec 2025, and the ACOP transition is extended to 30 Jun 2026.

This extension means pharmacists can continue delivering services using their existing Medication Review Numbers (MRNs) while they transition to new credentialing requirements.

The previous MMR transition deadline was 30 Jun, after which current MRNs were to become invalid (**PD** 19 Feb).

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) welcomed the announcement, with PSA Consultant Pharmacist Adviser Debbie Rigby noting the peak body's support for consultant pharmacists through the transition to new credentials.

"We've heard your concerns and have advocated for more time, particularly in ACOP roles," she said.

"I'm pleased there has been a time extension to complete the ACOP credential whilst continuing to implement this valuable service in aged care facilities."

Chair of the PSA's Consultant Pharmacists Community of Specialty Interest Deborah Hawthorne said the extension was a result of PSA's ongoing advocacy for consultant pharmacists.

"This decision provides much-needed certainty for consultant pharmacists, ensuring they can continue delivering critical patient care while completing their credentialing," Hawthorne said.

"We encourage all pharmacists to submit their evidence for recognition of prior learning (RPL) as soon as possible.

"We expect this will be the final extension, so it's your last real opportunity to make the most of the RPL pathway," she concluded.

Trump's pharma executive order fear

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has signed an executive order directing pharmaceutical companies to reduce US drug prices to align with what other countries pay, causing sales turmoil in pharma stocks and raising concerns in other countries.

The order gives drug companies price targets in the next 30 days, and notes that further action will be taken to lower prices if companies do not make "significant progress" toward those goals.

Trump told a press conference he is seeking cuts of between 59% and 90%.

"Everybody should equalise, everybody should pay the same price," he said.

The United States pays the highest prices for prescription drugs, often nearly three times more than other developed nations.

"The US has for too long

turned its back on Americans, who unwittingly sponsor both drug manufacturers and other countries," the order states.

In a system akin to Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the executive order directs the Health and Human Services Secretary, currently Robert F Kennedy Jr, to have the government buy prescription drugs directly from the manufacturers at "the most-favoured nation price", which means the lowest price other countries are paying.

By reducing the amount that drug companies can charge Americans, Trump expects pharmaceutical companies will compensate by charging the rest of the world - including Australia - higher prices.

An early warning of the move (**PD** 12 May) sent pharma stocks tumbling, but they rallied when it appeared that the order was not as bad as feared.

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References: 1. Silverstein et al. Clin Ophthalmol. 2020;14:3167-3177.
2. Springs CL. Adv Ther. 2010 Oct;27(10): 681-90. ©2025 Alcon Laboratories Pty Ltd.
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Dispensary Corner

US CUSTOMS and Border Protection (CBP) officers at the El Paso crossing apprehended a woman carrying a package of fentanyl in her vagina.

After being selected for a secondary exam at the border, the woman admitted to having a foreign object hidden inside her body, and was taken to a medical facility where it was confirmed and removed.

As you'd no doubt appreciate, it would have been catastrophic had the packaging failed.

CBP El Paso Port Director Ray Provencio said, "It is best to not engage in smuggling activity, but especially this form...It is risky on many levels."

The incident comes two weeks after El Paso border forces found more than 5kg of fentanyl tablets and powder hidden in the battery compartment of a motor scooter, while another haul was found within the frame of a bicycle.

More than 150 Americans die each day from fentanyl and synthetic opioid overdose.

Battle of the heavyweights

A **NEW** head-to-head study of tirzepatide (Mounjaro) versus semaglutide (Ozempic/Wegovy) for weight loss in people living with obesity, but not diabetes, has found that Mounjaro resulted in greater weight loss over 72 weeks than Wegovy.

The study, which was sponsored by Mounjaro manufacturer Eli Lilly, was presented at this year's European Congress on Obesity and published in *NEJM*.

It included 750 patients who were randomised to receive either Mounjaro or Wegovy, with those on Mounjaro achieving an average weight loss of 20.2%, compared with 13.7% average weight loss for Wegovy.

In other results, 65% of participants treated with Mounjaro lost at least 15% of their body weight compared with 40% of those on Wegovy, and attained an average waist circumference reduction of 18cm compared with 13cm for Wegovy.

Adverse events reported during the trial were similar for both medications and related primarily to gastrointestinal symptoms, which were generally mild to moderate in severity.

Around 6-8% of participants



dropped out due to side effects.

While both drugs are highly effective obesity management medications, this new study is the first to test, in a head-to-head trial, their efficacy and safety in adults with obesity but without type 2 diabetes.

"Thanks to the latest advancements in obesity management medications, more physicians and patients are witnessing significant weight reduction beyond what they have seen before," said study lead, Professor Louis Aronne.

"The head-to-head results demonstrated tirzepatide led to greater weight reduction compared to semaglutide, providing further evidence to support tirzepatide as an effective option for obesity management," he added.

Read the study [HERE](#). KB

McQueen to speak at Connect

THE keynote speaker for Pharmacy Connect 2025 has been announced, with renowned futurist, multi-award-winning speaker, and best-selling author, Michael McQueen, to take the stage.

Widely recognised for his ability to help organisations stay ahead of the curve, McQueen will deliver a session on 'Preparing now for what's next - how to thrive in an age of uncertainty'.

He will explore how to thrive amid rapid change, offering attendees unique insights into future trends and practical strategies for success.

"Michael's expertise in trend forecasting and his ability to provide actionable strategies for navigating uncertainty will be immensely beneficial to delegates at Pharmacy Connect 2025," said Conference Convenor, Kos Sclavos.

"His session will give delegates tools to tackle challenges both personally and professionally," he added.

The conference takes place 03-05 Sep in Sydney - [CLICK HERE](#) for earlybird registration.

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