

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus a full page from **MediChoice OSTEO-CAPS**.

Osteo control

NEW MediChoice OSTEO-CAPS from Nova Pharmaceuticals provide up to eight hours of relief from osteoarthritis pain.

The pharmacist-only medicine contains 665mg of paracetamol and comes in a pack of 96.

See details on **page four**.

Sandoz ADHD drug on PBS

SANDOZ has announced that Methylphenidate Sandoz XR (methylphenidate hydrochloride) has been listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the treatment of ADHD.

The central nervous system stimulant is a modified-release formulation of methylphenidate bioequivalent to Concerta (Janssen-Cilag), and is available in 18mg, 27mg, 36mg and 54mg tablets.

The number of Australians using ADHD medication has increased eleven-fold in the past 10 years, and with ongoing global shortages of methylphenidate, the listing supports improved access by providing an additional supply option for Australians living with ADHD.

Stock is expected to become available to wholesalers throughout November.

Guild president lands top international role

THE World Pharmacy Council (WPC) has announced the appointment of Professor Trent Twomey as its new President, succeeding US-based Doug Hoey, who has served in the role since 2021 (**PD** breaking news, 04 Nov).

Having served as immediate past Vice President of the WPC, as well as the current National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Professor Twomey (**pictured**) brings extensive experience in community pharmacy leadership to the role.

His appointment marks a new chapter for the WPC as it reinforces its commitment to championing the essential role and value of community pharmacy, and strengthens the profession's position as a cornerstone of person-centred, sustainable and resilient healthcare systems.

Professor Twomey said it is an "enormous privilege" to be entrusted with this new role, and that he looks forward to working with the Council's member organisations to "elevate the profession and ensure pharmacists are recognised as essential providers of primary care worldwide".

He also paid tribute to Hoey for his "outstanding leadership" of the WPC over the last five years.

"His dedication, unwavering passion and professionalism has ensured our Council has continued to grow as the global voice of community pharmacy.

"I am truly honoured that the Board has put their trust in me to serve as President and I pledge to do my utmost to build on the legacy of those before me."

Over the course of his presidency, the NCPA's Hoey advocated for global recognition of community pharmacy, strengthened international community pharmacy



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collaboration and promoted the WPC's evidence-based policy priorities, progressing the Council's mission to position pharmacists as essential healthcare providers in an evolving healthcare system.

Hoey, who will now serve as Vice

President of the WPC, commented: "Trent is an outstanding leader and a generational talent - I know he will continue serve WPC and its members superbly.

"I am very pleased that the WPC board has elected me as WPC Vice-President and that I will be able to continue to serve community pharmacy," he added.

The WPC was established in 1987 by community pharmacy organisations with the aim of delivering better health and wellbeing, empowering community pharmacy globally. **KB**



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References: 1. Greive KA, Barnes TM. Increased bioavailability of hydrocortisone dissolved in a cream base. *Australas J Dermatol.* 2015; 56(2):e30–e34. 2. van Zureen EJ, Fedorowicz Z, Christensen R, Lavrijsen APM, Arents BWM. Emollients and moisturisers for eczema (Review). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2017, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD012119. DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD012119.pub2.
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Palliative care conversation hits Canberra

PALLIATIVE Care Australia (PCA) and Painaustralia came together at Parliament House in Canberra yesterday, to highlight the urgent need for timely pain assessment and management, and to reinforce the importance of continued access to essential pain relief medicines for people receiving palliative care.

The event was hosted by the Parliamentary Friends of Palliative Care, with policymakers, clinicians and advocates joining forces to advance compassionate, evidence-based care for all Australians.

PCA launched its strategic plan for 2026-2029 at the event, while Painaustralia showcased a new My Pain assessment Communication Tool (MPaCT) in development, highlighting national efforts to improve the experience of people living with pain and those receiving palliative care.

PCA CEO Camilla Rowland said that quality pain management is fundamental to the quality of life of people receiving palliative care, but that access to medicines is an ongoing challenge.

Amid shortages of critical palliative care medicines, PCA, Painaustralia and five other organisations released an 11-point plan to resolve the shortages in Nov 2024 (**PD** 19 Feb).

"PCA congratulates the government on passing legislation to lower patient out-of-pocket costs for medicines on the PBS," Rowland said.

"We encourage the Government to go further by making medicines prescribed for palliative care free to consumers," she continued.

"The last months and weeks of life are when healthcare costs really add up.

"The 11-point plan has more ideas to ensure every Australian can receive timely, compassionate care and relief from pain at the end of life," Rowland said.

Painaustralia CEO Monika Boogs said effective pain management is fundamental to maintaining dignity and quality of life for people receiving palliative care, yet pain can be incredibly difficult to describe or measure, especially



for people in palliative care, older Australians, people who are non-verbal, "or anyone whose voice may not always be heard".

"That's why patients, working in partnership with Painaustralia and Dragon Claw Charity, developed MPaCT, an innovative resource to help them express what their pain feels like, how it affects their daily lives and help them receive the support they need," she said. **KB**

Pictured: Painaustralia Chair Simon Corbell, PCA CEO Camilla Rowland, Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler, PCA Chair Dr Peter Allcroft, and Painaustralia CEO Monika Boogs.

COVID worse for kids' hearts than vax

A LARGE UK study has found that COVID vaccination is associated with smaller risk of rare heart complications compared to COVID infection itself in children.

An analysis of health records covering nearly 14 million people under 18 years old between January 2020 and December 2022 assessed the short- and long-term risks of health conditions associated with COVID-19 diagnosis and vaccination.

While there was a small increase in the risk of myocarditis or pericarditis within the first four weeks after vaccination, there was a greater - though still small - increased risk after COVID infection.

"This study confirms what many other studies have shown - that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are safe and effective in reducing the risks of serious complications of COVID-19 infection," said Prof Raina MacIntyre from the Kirby Institute at UNSW, who was not involved with the study.

"No vaccine or drug is 100% safe - all have side effects, but they go through a rigorous process to ensure that the benefits far outweigh the risks."

Prof MacIntyre reinforced that this study is among many studies that show the risk versus benefit clearly favours vaccines for children.

"The risk of myocarditis is low - one to three per 100,000 children - and there is a much higher risk of myocarditis after COVID-19 infection, as we have also shown," she said.

The study authors said the research provides important evidence to inform vaccination policies and support risk-benefit discussions with caregivers and healthcare professionals when considering COVID vaccination in children.

Read the study **HERE**.

Public health expenditure falls short of 5% target, AIHW finds

Government public health spending is returning to pre-COVID levels after surging during the pandemic, according to a new report published today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The report - *Government expenditure on public health activities in Australia 2023-24* - looks at funding by the Australian Government and state and territory governments over the decade starting 2013.

Total government expenditure on public health activities in 2023-24 was \$5.4 billion, or around \$200 per person, down 30% or \$2.3 billion from 2022-23.

It accounted for 2.9% of total government health spending, similar to pre-pandemic levels and well below the 5% target envisaged in the National Preventive Health Strategy.

"Public health spending grew

modestly during the pre-pandemic period, rising 2.5% each year on average," said AIHW spokesperson Geoff Callaghan.

"This growth accelerated significantly during COVID, peaking in 2020-21, before returning to pre-pandemic levels," he explained.

Of the \$5.4 billion spent in 2023-24, the federal government funded \$3.4 billion, while state and territory governments contributed \$2.0 billion.

Organised immunisation and communicable disease control continued to account for the highest levels of expenditure, at \$2.4b and \$0.9b respectively.

Around \$442 million was spent on activities aimed at reducing the overuse or abuse of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes/vaping, illicit and other drugs of dependence.

Communicable disease control saw a large spending spike in

2020-21, driven by government spending on the COVID response.

Read the AIHW report **HERE**.

MEANWHILE, in a new peer-reviewed commentary on preventative health spending, Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin, CEO of the Public Health Association of Australia, pointed out that our current health budget is unsustainable, and that lifting investment in prevention "would be good for the economy, good for communities, and good for our overstretched healthcare system".

"We want more Australians to live long, healthy and productive lives," said Prof Slevin.

"By being healthier for longer, we can make more Australian lives better, Australian families stronger and achieve more of what is important to us all - all by spending money more wisely."

"Surely that should be a key government priority."



Dispensary Corner

FOR many people, the opportunity for human touch is one of the many benefits of a massage - but for those who don't want it, there are robots.

New Yorkers have recently welcomed the 'Cloud Touchless Massage', a fully automated experience that swaps human hands for high-tech robotics to deliver "affordable, customisable calm".

Comprising a large comfy chair a few steps more evolved than the typical shopping centre experience, there are several massage types on offer, such as 'sports recharge' and 'office chair repair'.

The main potential drawback is that the chair stops at the upper back, so there is no head or neck massage.

But still, for US\$19 (about A\$30) a visit - less if you buy a monthly package - it's a pretty good deal.

"People come to Cloud because they want all the benefits of a massage without the awkwardness of being touched or making small talk," Bo Peabody, founder of Cloud Touchless Massage, told the *New York Post*.

"For people who value self-care but do not have hours and hundreds of dollars to spend at a spa, Cloud offers a transformative escape at a fraction of the cost of traditional treatments."

With 500 members having already signed up to its Union Square outlet since opening, the owners are planning to open other locations across the city.

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