

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Chemsave
- MediChoice
- Glucojel

Do the maths

ALIGNING with Chemsave delivers bottom-line benefits for your pharmacy.

If you are looking to buy a pharmacy, consider joining Chemsave's Wealth 100 Club. Learn more on **page four**.

Mini-mise pain

MEDICHOICE'S new Ibuprofen Mini liquid capsules provide rapid pain relief in an easy-to-swallow format.

Learn more about the MediChoice analgesic range on **page five**.

Guild welcomes expanded optometrist prescribing

A PROPOSAL by the Optometry Board of Australia to change prescribing rules for optometrists could see them prescribing oral medicines from an approved list to treat potentially sight-threatening eye conditions, bacterial eye infections, eye allergies and short-term eye pain.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has welcomed the proposal, recognising it as another positive step towards improving patient access to timely, affordable, and effective care.

Optometrists are currently permitted to prescribe topical medicines, and the move to extend this to oral medicines would provide greater access for patients, particularly in rural and remote areas where people may have difficulty accessing a GP or ophthalmologist for a prescription.

"Giving people with eye conditions timely access to the right treatment, under the care of qualified professionals, could

make a real difference to people's eye health," Optometry Board of Australia Chair Stuart Aamodt said.

"It could very well be the difference between a patient making a full recovery and being left with lasting damage or permanent loss of vision."

Optometrists in Australia are educated, trained and qualified to safely prescribe both topical and oral medicines, but to date have not been able to offer patients all treatment options.

The changes would bring Australia in line with other jurisdictions such as New Zealand, the UK and USA.

Guild National President Professor Trent Twomey said the proposal reflected a growing recognition that empowering qualified health professionals to practise to the full extent of their training delivered better outcomes for patients and communities - particularly in rural



and regional Australia.

"When patients can access the right care from the right health professional at the right time, everyone benefits," Professor Twomey said.

"This proposal aligns with the Guild's long-held view that scope of practice reforms across health professions - including community pharmacy - are essential to strengthening Australia's primary care system."

Public consultation on the review of the Board's draft registration standard and guidelines for use of scheduled medicines is open until 24 Dec 2025 - learn more **HERE**. KB

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Back the bid

GLUCOJEL has teamed up with Netball Australia in its bid for the game's inclusion at the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

By pledging their support, your customers could win a year's supply of beans, some Diamonds gear and more - see **page six** for details.

Want a role in medicine decisions?

THE Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced individuals - including pharmacists and pharmacologists - who would like to be considered for upcoming member vacancies on national health technology assessment (HTA) committees and sub-committees.

These include the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) and Drug Utilisation Sub Committee (DUSC).

HTA committees provide independent expert advice to the Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability about the comparative safety, clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness of medicines, and medical services and other medical products.

For more information about what is involved and how to apply, click **HERE**.

Could COVID vax fight cancer?

PATIENTS with advanced lung or skin cancer who received a COVID mRNA vaccine within 100 days of starting immunotherapy drugs lived significantly longer than those who did not get the vaccine, according to US research published in *Nature*.

After analysing than 1,000 patient records, it appeared the vaccine helped to create strong immune responses, even in patients where this was not expected to occur.

In patients with lung cancer, getting the vaccine was linked with a near doubling of median survival, from 20.6 months to 37.3 months, while the median survival for patients with metastatic melanoma increased from 26.7 months to a range of 30 to 40 months and possibly more.

Assoc Prof Seth Cheetham, Deputy Director of the BASE mRNA Facility at the University of Queensland, suggested this may happen due to mRNA vaccines quickly "waking up" the immune system, with animal models showing that this surge helps prime cancer-fighting immune cells which infiltrated tumours.

"Researchers have been developing personalised mRNA cancer vaccines which use molecules from tumours to better teach the immune system to recognise and destroy cancer cells," said Assoc Prof Cheetham, who was not involved with the study.

"However, while this personalised approach appears highly effective in early clinical studies, it is currently expensive and logistically



challenging," he continued.

"This new study points to a practical, inexpensive way to increase treatment effectiveness with an existing mRNA vaccine."

However, he cautioned that the study findings were retrospective and only showed association, not causation, and controlled trials were needed.

"If these confirmatory trials are successful, doctors may soon have an unexpected powerful new option for treating cancer," he said.

The paper is available **HERE**.

MEANWHILE, updated COVID vaccines are still providing effective protection against infection, emergency department visits, hospitalisation and death, according to US research published today.

The new study shows that the 2024-25 COVID vaccines provide similar protection to the previous formulation, with the researchers anticipating the 2025-26 vaccines, which target similar omicron subvariants as the 2024-25 vaccines, to have similar effectiveness.

The researchers said they were most protective four weeks after vaccination with effectiveness waning over time, highlighting the importance of annual vaccination. *KB*

CKD PBS expansion for Jardiance

FROM 01 Nov, Jardiance (empagliflozin 10mg) will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the treatment of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in adults at moderate-to-severe risk of their condition worsening.

It is expected that 70,000 Australians with CKD will be eligible to access the medicine, with Professor

Eugenia Pedagogos, a Melbourne Nephrologist and Medical Director at Epworth Freemasons Hospital, among those welcoming the expanded medicine subsidy.

"Thousands of Australians with varying stages of chronic kidney disease can now access an affordable treatment through the PBS for the first time," Prof Pedagogos said.

"This marks an important milestone for Australians with chronic kidney disease, ensuring access to care from the earlier stages of disease to the critical point before dialysis.

"The more we can do to prevent the slippery slope of kidney disease, the better."

The SGLT-2 inhibitor was listed on the PBS in 2024 for a smaller group of Australians with proteinuric CKD.

Earlier this year the drug was listed to allow use from the start in patients with T2D taking metformin who have or are at high risk of cardiovascular disease or are First Nations peoples (**PD** 02 Apr).

Check out the latest in

Beauty & Wellness

Every Thursday in *Pharmacy Daily*





Dispensary Corner

SCIENTISTS have figured out why coffee beans harvested from the faeces of Asian palm civets taste so good (according to coffee connoisseurs, at least).

If you have no idea what you just read, basically, a cat-like animal native to South and Southeast Asia is fed coffee beans, and once it poos them out, the beans are packaged (hopefully after being cleaned) and sold for an exorbitant amount of money, because apparently they are far more delicious than regular beans.

Kopi luwak, or civet coffee beans, can sell for more than \$1,000 per kilogram, but there has long been debate about whether the unusual harvesting method actually changes the coffee's chemical composition.

Well, after collecting 68 poop samples from five estates growing Robusta coffee in Karnataka, India and comparing the chemical composition of the poo-beans against their undigested form, researchers found that the civet beans had a significantly higher total fat content, as well as much higher levels of two fatty acids.

In results published in *Scientific Reports*, the researchers concluded that the chemical differences in the civet coffee are a result of fermentation of the beans in the digestive system of the civets, and that the differences likely affect the coffee's final flavour.



Beware potential rental pitfalls

OPINION

Buyer and tenant advocate Paul Rowe (pictured) shares some potential pitfalls to watch out for when leasing.

Got an opinion or experience to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

IT WAS great to read the opinion by Mark Raphael (*Leasing? Time to research and strategise*, PD 16 Oct), and, having been a tenant advocate for some 20 years, I would make these additional comments.

The landscape of leasing has most certainly turned in favour of the landlord since the government-imposed period during and post COVID.

Landlords are seeking to recover the perceived "costs" incurred when they provided leasing relief during the pandemic.

We are finding that market reviews are turning into a battle zone, where the landlord in many cases understands that the tenant may be unable or unwilling to move, and as such has greater flexibility to increase rent prices, pushing against upper rental parameters.

Bigger issues facing tenants these days, within what has become a hot commercial market, are redevelopment clauses within their leases.

These allow the landlord, under certain circumstances, to order the tenant to leave if they decide to go ahead with a development.

Dependent on the tenancy and the lease documentation, there can be some assistance given by the landlord to re-house the tenant, but in other cases the tenant will need to find somewhere to go at great cost and inconvenience to them and their business.



Additionally, with shopping centres there are often requirements for the tenant to complete a refit of their premises every five to seven years.

This can cost upwards of \$1,800-2,300 per square metre, which equates to around \$400k on a 200m² site.

This cost has to be borne by the tenant and undermines any growth that they may have been able to achieve in previous years.

Lastly, and often unrealised, is the fact that if a tenant wishes to sell their business, they may well need to assign their lease to the new business owner.

Unfortunately, there are situations where a landlord may decline to accept the assignment, even if the new owner/tenant financially stacks up.

This can potentially be taken to court, but realistically, commencing legal action against a new landlord is fraught with danger - one result, which I have seen in practice, can be that the business owner is not able to sell their business, placing them in a very difficult financial position.

As always in business, getting good professional advice on the way into a lease - not after signing the lease - is far more advantageous.

Paul Rowe is a pharmacy specialist with NAI Harcourts commercial real estate services.

CSL hammered by low US vax rates

IN ITS AGM this morning, CSL announced it has downgraded its full-year profit and revenue outlook following lower-than-expected vaccination rates in the US and government cost-containment measures in China, which have reduced demand for albumin.

CSL Chief Executive Paul McKenzie said that the company's influenza vaccine business Seqirus expects US vaccination rates to decline by 12% for the overall population and by 14% for the 65+ age group for the Northern Hemisphere 2025/26 season compared to last year.

Despite the lower flu vax rates, revenue for CSL Seqirus increased 2% as the avian flu pandemic response offset some of the losses.

Meanwhile for CSL Vifor, revenue was up 8% as iron sales grew in volume and the nephrology portfolio gained momentum, while CSL Behring also showed continued growth with revenue increasing by 6% at constant currency.

The biotech giant has cut its FY26 revenue growth outlook from 4-5% to 2-3%, while its NPATA growth forecast has been updated to 4-7%, down from 7-10%.

"Due to ongoing uncertainty in the US influenza vaccine market, while there are some scenarios in which group NPATA growth may touch double digits, we believe high single-digit growth is a more appropriate expectation until the US influenza vaccine market improves," McKenzie said.

Do The Math(s)!

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