

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of the latest industry news, plus a full page from Medadvisor.

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Free RSV vaccine for older adults

THE Australian Government yesterday announced that respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccinations will now be covered under the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for Australians aged 75 and older, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 60 years and older (PD breaking news 19 Apr).

From 15 May, over 2 million older adults will be eligible to access the Arexvy RSV vaccine through participating pharmacies, GPs, and community and Aboriginal health services at no cost.

RSV is a common and contagious virus which usually causes mild symptoms similar to colds or the flu, but can lead to serious health complications in older adults and young babies.

Pregnant women are already covered for RSV vaccination under the NIP to provide protection for the baby.

Outside these groups, Arexvy is indicated for all adults aged 60 and over and adults aged 50-59 who



are at increased risk of RSV disease, and they can access the vaccine privately at a cost of around \$300.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia welcomed the announcement, with vice president Simon Blacker saying the decision is "a significant step in protecting those most at risk from a virus that can cause serious illness, hospitalisation and death".

"This reform will save lives and help keep older Australians well through winter," he added.

Dr Alan Paul, executive country medical director of GSK Australia, the manufacturer of Arexvy, said the initiative is "a significant milestone in the prevention of RSV disease in older adults".

"This decision reflects the growing recognition of RSV as a serious health concern among ageing populations," he continued.

"We are proud to make this vaccine available to older adults and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and we remain committed to supporting healthcare professionals in protecting these adults from severe outcomes associated with this respiratory infection." KB

\$2 million steroid and peptide bust

A JOINT investigation undertaken by the Australian Border Force (ABF), the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and Victoria Police, has resulted in the arrest of three Victorians for importing performance and image enhancing drugs (PIEDs) into Australia.

The eight-month operation led to the seizure of PIEDs, illicit steroids and peptide products with an estimated street value in excess of \$2 million.

Aligned with the investigation was TGA action on the suspected unlawful supply, manufacture

and advertising of unregistered therapeutic goods and prescription-only medicines, including injectable peptide products (PD 14 Apr).

Head of the TGA, Professor Anthony Lawler, said the outcome reinforced the importance of strong collaboration to protect public health.

"Unapproved steroids and peptide products present serious and unacceptable risks to consumers, particularly when they are injected and manufactured outside of regulated supply chains," Professor Lawler said. KB

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1. Australian Government. Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. Australian Immunisation Handbook. Available at <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au>. Accessed March 2026.
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Dispensary Corner

IN NEWS set to dismay nutritionists and delight vegetable haters, a recent study has linked consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains with a higher risk of developing lung cancer.

A team from the University of Southern California last week presented research at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research suggesting that non-smoking Americans under the age of 50 who follow healthier diets could face a higher risk of developing lung cancer.

They believe it could be due to exposure to pesticides used in agriculture - vegetables, fruits and whole grains are more likely to carry higher levels of pesticide residue compared to dairy, meat and many processed foods.

Agricultural workers who are regularly exposed to pesticides tend to have higher rates of lung cancer, which supports the possibility of a connection.

The team emphasised more research is needed to confirm the association.

Time to scale prescribing: AdPha

AS THE Pharmacy Board of Australia prepares to consult on a national endorsement for scheduled medicines, Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) has released a position paper covering pharmacist prescribing across team-based care settings, calling for access to PBS-subsidised medicines to be prioritised in future reforms.

The paper outlined a fit-for-purpose endorsement pathway for pharmacist prescribers across all settings, aimed at preventing workforce fragmentation, improving mobility, and expanding patient access to care.

The peak body has identified four key requirements to ensure endorsed pharmacist prescribers are embedded and enabled to practise to full-scope within team-based care settings:

- A fit-for-purpose endorsement that supports prescribing across all care settings
- A nationally recognised endorsement recorded against registration so pharmacists can prescribe within their scope in team-based environments
- A national framework to validate capability and support practice across an evolving, defined scope
- Ability for endorsed pharmacists



to prescribe all medicines within their defined scope, including PBS-subsidised medicines.

AdPha national president Assoc Prof Tom Simpson said it is time to move the discussion beyond a community-only lens, pointing out pharmacist prescribing is already delivering real benefits in hospitals.

“Now it’s time to scale that service across the system,” he said.

“Expanding prescribing into all team-based settings would unlock significant gains for patients, health professionals and the health system.”

Assoc Prof Simpson also emphasised the need for a nationally coordinated approach so that pharmacist prescribing can move beyond “a patchwork of pilot programs”, as well as the importance of pharmacists being able to prescribe PBS-subsidised medicines to ensure patient equity.

The position paper is [HERE](#). *KB*

Market sentiment remains strong

BUYER demand for pharmacies remains strong, while likely supply has improved, according to the latest findings of the Attain Pharmacy Market Sentiment Survey.

Around 42% of those surveyed said they were looking to buy a pharmacy within the next 12 months, and 43% indicated they were likely to sell a pharmacy within the next five years.

More than three quarters (77%) believed that pharmacy business prices will increase over the next 12 months - the highest level seen since the survey started in July 2020.

“The results from the Feb/Mar 2026 *Pharmacy Market Sentiment Survey* continue to show strong demand for pharmacists looking to buy pharmacies,” said Attain director Natalie Siriani.

“The good news is that the data is also showing better likely future supply of pharmacies on the market,” she added.

Attain pharmacy business brokers conduct the survey of 65 pharmacists every four months.

Pharmacy spend grew to \$15.6b over the year.

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CommBank iQ Market Monitor iQ. Health industry spending between 01 February 2025 and 31 January 2026.



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EDITORIAL

Editor - Karina Bray
Journalists - Adam Bishop, Myles Stedman, Janie Medbury, James Bale
Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper
Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller
Editorial Director - Damian Francis

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan
Business Development Manager
Kara Stanley
advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER

Matthew Vince

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

info@pharmacydaily.com.au

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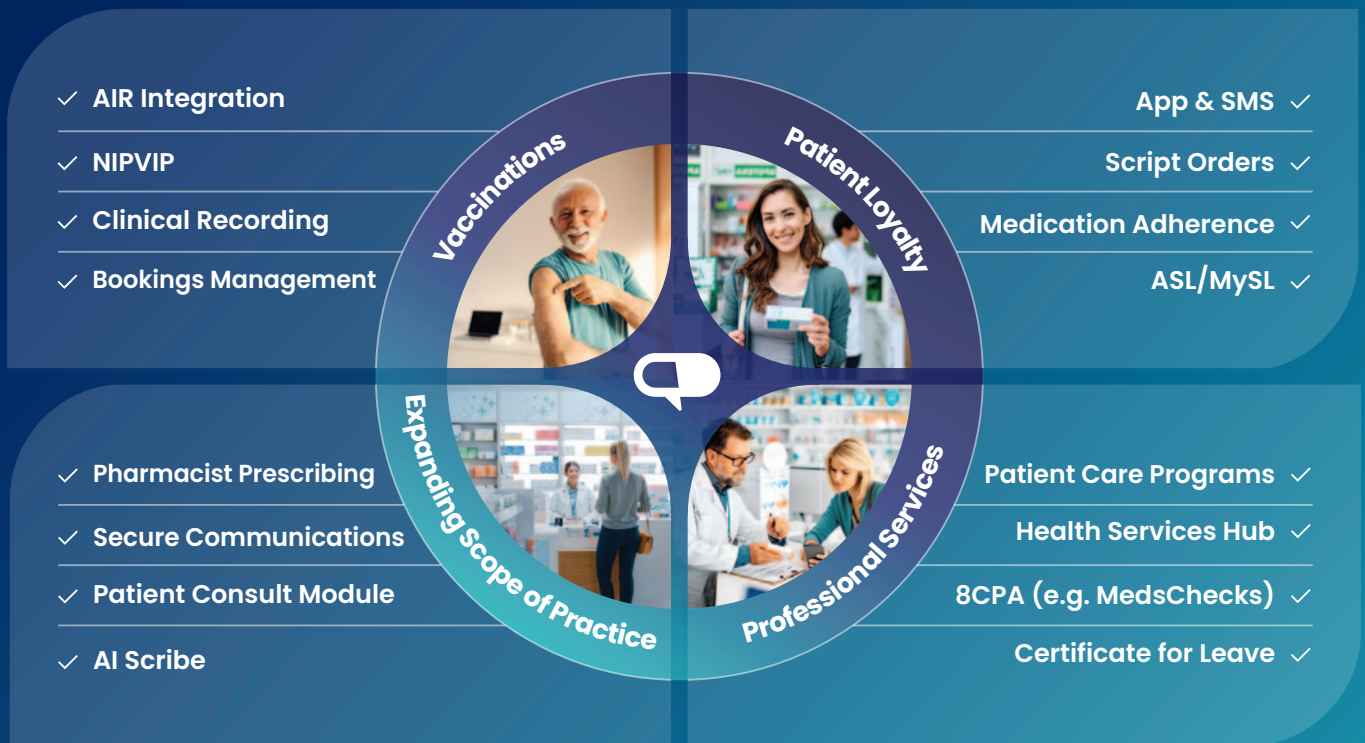
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