

Today's issue of PD

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

- Willach
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Rethink dispensary

WILLACH Consis C provides the latest in robotic automation for a more efficient dispensary set-up, freeing up space and time within your pharmacy - see **p3**.

Pregnancy vaping increases SUDI

A **NEW** Zealand study has linked vaping in pregnancy and mother-baby bed sharing with sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI).

"The interaction between maternal smoking and bed sharing is well established," said study lead Professor Ed Mitchell, of Waipapa Taumata Rau - University of Auckland.

"What is new and concerning is that vaping may be showing a similar pattern of risk as smoking, especially when combined with bed sharing.

"This raises the possibility that the effects of nicotine itself, rather than how it is delivered, may be contributing to infant vulnerability."

The team recommended aiming for a nicotine-free pregnancy - more **HERE**.

Social prescribing and the arts

A **FORUM** hosted yesterday by the Australian Social Prescribing Institute of Research and Education (ASPIRE) at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House Canberra explored the role of arts, culture and civic participation in creating a healthier, more connected community.

While the evidence of health benefits arising from arts participation is already there, as are rich arts and cultural opportunities within our communities, Jenny Kirschner from Pharmacy Addressing Loneliness and Social-isolation (PALS) said the challenge is how policy can better value these existing assets, connect people to them, and translate the evidence into greater investment in arts as part of preventative health and wellbeing strategies.

"Today was a powerful reminder that the arts are not simply 'nice to have' - they are an essential part of the solution to healthier people and healthier communities," Kirschner said.

"As pharmacists, we have a professional responsibility to pay attention to the evidence



and step up to address the wider determinants of health that shape the lives and wellbeing of our patients."

Attending was Professor Mark Naunton, president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), who highlighted the role of pharmacists in social prescribing, with 'arts prescriptions' another possibility.

"There is growing evidence that social prescribing is good for people's health - it improves depressive symptoms, anxiety, reduces loneliness and increases individual wellbeing," Professor Naunton said.

"Pharmacists have been doing social prescribing for a very long time - many pharmacists probably don't even know they are doing it.

"Encouraging people to participate in the arts is associated with decreased pain and frailty, and time free from dementia."

The forum was the first in a broader national conversation about how Australia can create a healthy society beyond the formal healthcare system. **KB**

Pictured: Jenny Kirschner and Professor Mark Naunton.

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New CEO for med cannabis body

THE recently formed Medicinal Cannabis Council Australia (MCCA) has announced a new CEO, former Victorian State MP Fiona Patten, replacing Gail Morgan who was appointed in Jun (**PD** 03 Jun).

The MCCA is sponsoring a three-day industry conference under the theme 'Cultivating Trust. Navigating Change' in Melbourne, finishing tomorrow.

ACannabis26 features over 300 cultivators, manufacturers, regulators, pharmacists, health professionals and researchers attending and celebrating 10 years of regulated operations.

Patten said that the conference reflected a pivotal moment for the sector as it transitions from a rapidly emerging industry to an established part of Australia's healthcare system.

Meanwhile, new chair Geoff Bloom, a lawyer specialising in medical regulation, said that after a decade building access for patients, the next stage is about building trust with patients, health professionals, governments, regulators, and the broader community.

Representatives from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), Office of Drug Control (ODC) and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) are on hand to discuss regulatory and professional standards.

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Dispensary Corner

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump has signed an executive order this morning Australian time committing the country to "Gold Standard Childhood Vaccine Recommendations", including the delivery of the MMR vaccine as three separate vaccines spread over a period of time and a reduction in the number of required vaccines.

Designed to realign the nation's vaccine policies with "Best Practices From Peer, Developed Countries" - it is unclear which ones - the new orders will ensure that "Americans are receiving the best scientifically supported medical advice in the world, as well as protecting religious liberty and parental authority".

While announcing the new orders, Trump discussed the role that increasing rates of autism played in his policy, attributing the rise to the large number of vaccines kids have - despite the vaccine-autism link having been well and truly debunked.

Republican Senator Bill Cassidy, a doctor, made his thoughts clear on X.

"I'm a doctor. This executive order is wrong," he wrote.

"The President does not have the expertise to make these changes. Vaccines are overwhelmingly safe. Vaccines are effective. Vaccines DO NOT cause autism.

"Breaking up vaccines will mean children have to get more shots to get the same protection, not fewer shots.

"It will increase hesitancy and make children less safe."

Pharmacy role in minimising peptide harm



AS THE current surge in the use of unapproved peptides is felt across the Australian health system, delegates at the recent Pharmaceutical Society of Australia conference, PSA26, heard pharmacists have a role to play in harm minimisation.

In a session looking at how to navigate challenges around the use of peptides, Peter Guthrey, PSA senior pharmacist, strategic policy, told the audience that the first time he had come across peptides in practice was when a customer came in asking for bacteriostatic water - which he explained he had not heard of at the time, but is water with a bit of alcohol in it to prevent bacteria from growing.

"They were going to rehydrate something that arrived in a vial, they were going to leave it in the fridge at home for a month, and they're going to put a different syringe into it every time, draw a dose, and administer it.

"And they came to me seeking advice around how to do this."

Academic and community pharmacist Dr Jack Collins advised having a conversation with the customer to find out what they know about the product, if they know what strength it is, and clarifying some of the risks.

"There is certainly a role for us

to engage with people and try to gauge what they understand, and at a bare minimum, supply sterile injecting equipment so some of the risk is reduced if they're going to go ahead and do it," Dr Collins said.

While peptide users may see the product as regular healthcare, they face many of the same issues as illicit drug users, said clinical toxicologist and emergency medicine physician Professor Angela Chiew.

She highlighted some of the parallels with illicit drug use, and said, "we can take lessons from that group, in that you can teach peptide users about how to reduce infection, as well as the potential risks with peptides and when to seek medical help".

"It's also about educating them that they're not regulated drugs."

Professor Chiew also noted that the boom in peptides and the need for safe injecting equipment was resulting in shortages for needle exchange programs, elevating the risk of blood-borne virus transmission in this group - another health system impact.

Therapeutic Goods Administration head Professor Tony Lawler noted, "you don't change people's behaviour by shaming them, or by ridiculing them, or minimising their concerns - we've seen this through

the vaccine conversation.

"I think a lot of people in the peptides space know that there is risk and they're potentially doing something that's beyond normal healthcare," he continued.

"So I think highlighting the risks and the potential consequences is really important."

In terms of potential needle and syringe shortages, Professor Lawler said the TGA has mechanisms in place to identify and respond quickly to medicine or medicine device shortages, and "we're onto it".

"I think the real issue is just being very clear to people that these are not safe - absolutely not safe," he concluded. **KB**

Fertility drug ups pregnancy risks

A DRUG widely used in fertility treatment may be linked with pregnancy risks, according to new research from Adelaide University.

The team found that high doses of clomiphene citrate in IVF treatment - accumulated over multiple fertility treatment cycles - could increase the risk of miscarriage and multiple births, with some evidence of increased risk of stillbirths.

"Our findings suggest there may be a point where increasing the dose offers little additional benefit while exposing women to greater risk, highlighting the importance of carefully balancing effectiveness with safety when making treatment decisions," lead author Associate Professor Sheree Boulet said.

Read the paper **HERE**.

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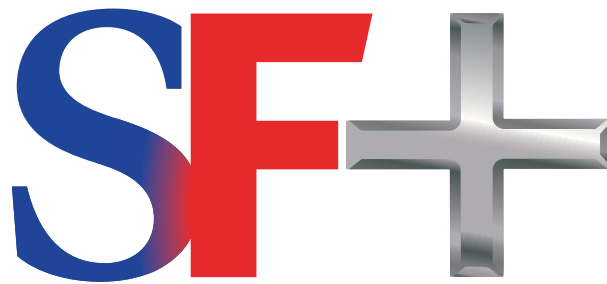
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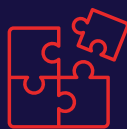
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For more Information, contact:

Paul Gough CEO
paul@stirlingfildes.com.au

Keir Maloney Head of Retail
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