

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features three pages of news.

APC thanks outgoing NAPSA president

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has congratulated Mia Avram on her appointment as president of the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (PD 06 Jul), and paid tribute to outgoing president Sebastian Harper's "outstanding leadership and collaboration" over the past two years.

"During Sebastian's presidency, APC and NAPSA strengthened an already positive partnership through a range of important initiatives," APC deputy CEO Brett Streatfeild said.

These included the signing and implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding between the organisations to formalise a shared commitment to supporting pharmacy students and the future pharmacy workforce, and supporting Indigenous pharmacy students through initiatives such as the Deadly Future Pharmacists event.

In welcoming Avram's appointment, Streatfeild said it represents a continuation of NAPSA's excellent work in recent years and provides valuable continuity for the organisation and its advocacy.

Pharmacist to lead \$5m AMR project

FLINDERS University researchers have been awarded almost \$5 million from Australia's Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a growing and under-recognised health threat in rural and remote Australia.

Shortcomings in remote area diagnosis mean that 26% of antimicrobial prescriptions in remote primary healthcare clinics are deemed unsuitable, leading to AMR rates for common bacteria of up to four times the national average.

First Nations communities are disproportionately affected, and the issue places significant strain on the healthcare system.

The project will address the fundamental issues that drive AMR and design more efficient prescription of effective antibiotics, and is headed by Dr Danny Tsai, a Flinders research pharmacist based at the Centre for Remote Health and Alice Springs Hospital.

"It's a complex problem," Dr Tsai (pictured) explained.

"Over-prescription of antimicrobials is driven by concerns of undertreatment in remote settings, limited access to specialist support, insufficient knowledge of AMR, geographic isolation from tertiary care centres and constrained healthcare resources," he pointed out.

Clinician-led antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) programs in Northern Territory hospitals have successfully improved antimicrobial use and prescribing

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practices through a range of multimodal strategies, including education, antimicrobial prescribing surveillance, and targeted clinical support.

The challenge now is to extend these successes to remote settings, where access to comparable health services and AMS resources is often limited.

Dr Tsai is confident the new project - Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance in Remote Australia (TARRA) - will enable a comprehensive AMS program in remote NT locations, with surveillance tools, virtual clinical support, targeted education, culturally appropriate health promotion, and horizon scanning for emerging AMR threats.

"We need to provide more advice to the people prescribing medicines in remote areas - who are often remote area nurses or Aboriginal health practitioners, due to a shortage of doctors in remote Australia," Dr Tsai explained.

"They will benefit greatly from the introduction of hospital principles to remote settings."

"We need to make this comprehensive, so that all health care workers and patients are equipped with more information about effective medications."

Dr Tsai received the 2019 Pharmaceutical Society of Australia SA/NT Pharmacist of the Year Award and the 2023 NT Allied Health Excellence in Research Award, and was commended for his significant contribution to the safe and effective use of medicines in First Nations people, along with improving clinical pharmacy services in Central Australia. KB

TGL to support remote care manuals

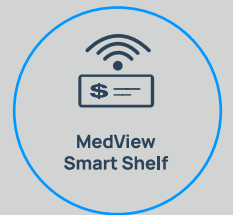
THERAPEUTIC Guidelines Limited (TGL) has been appointed by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing as the new digital health care publisher of the Remote Primary Health Care Manuals.

Transitioning to a new digital platform will enable easy access to regular updates and guidance for the diverse users delivering healthcare in remote Aboriginal Health Service settings, and support a more user-friendly resource that continues to uphold the clinical quality of the manuals.

TGL has begun consultation with key stakeholders, and the new digital manuals will launch in Feb 2027.

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Light gets HI Service conformance

OEXA has announced that Light, its community pharmacy clinical services platform (PD 27 Feb), is among the first vendors to achieve Healthcare Identifiers (HI) Service conformance with the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA).

Bringing verified national patient identity into pharmacy lays the foundation for prescribing and scope-of-practice consultations to connect with the rest of a patient's care team.

The HI Service is the national system that uniquely identifies patients, healthcare providers, and healthcare organisations in Australia, and underpins electronic prescribing, the Active Script List, My Health Record, and the broader national health ecosystem.

Oexa co-founder and head of product and experience Mina Giang said, "HI is foundational national infrastructure, and we've been working towards proper integration from day one."

"For community pharmacy, this milestone is a step toward prescribing and scope-of-practice consultations being properly connected into the rest of the health system, supporting the expanded role pharmacists are increasingly playing," she added.

Light is used by pharmacies across Australia, including TerryWhite Chemmart.

Pharmacy fundraising for floods



TERRITORY Pharmacy stores marked World Chocolate Day yesterday with the launch of a special promotion offering customers half-price handcrafted Bumble Bean Chocolates, while helping raise funds for flood relief across the Top End.

Proceeds of chocolate sales from its Royal Darwin Hospital, Stuart Park, Karama and Palmerston Oasis pharmacies will be donated to the Australian Red Cross to support work helping those impacted by the Mar floods and ex-Tropical Cyclone Narelle, with Territory Pharmacy parent company Northpharm to match every dollar raised.

"It is fitting to launch this promotion on World Chocolate Day, allowing the community to enjoy discounted chocolate from a local Darwin-based company while also supporting a worthy cause," said Effie Bagla, pharmacy manager at Royal Darwin Hospital.

"With Northpharm matching every sale dollar-for-dollar, this initiative will significantly increase

the impact of the fundraising efforts, supporting more Territorians affected by the floods.

"This initiative is especially close to our hearts as our two Katherine stores sustained flood damage."

In Mar, water from the worst flood event in Katherine in nearly 30 years inundated the PharmaSave Territory Pharmacy Katherine Central (PD 10 Mar) and Territory Pharmacy Katherine Terrace, with the latter forced to close for several weeks (PD 18 Mar).

Despite the challenges, Northpharm pharmacies worked with health agencies and emergency services to maintain continuity of medicine supply to isolated communities and patients.

The significant impact of the floods is still evident, with many Territorians yet to recover.

The Australian Red Cross continues to support recovery efforts, with funds raised through the promotion helping to provide ongoing assistance to affected communities. KB

Nurse prescribing a step forward

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has described legislation enabling endorsed registered nurses to prescribe medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PD 03 Jul) as "a positive step toward improving timely access to care for patients and reducing pressure across Australia's stretched health system".

In welcoming the move, Guild national vice president Simon Blacker said the reform reflects the need to ensure Australia is making the most of its highly trained health workforce.

"Australia's health system is under increasing pressure, with growing demand on GPs, hospitals and aged care services," Blacker said.

"Reforms like this help ensure we are getting the most out of every health professional by enabling them to work to their full training and capability."

"Nurses play a critical role across our health system, particularly in rural, regional and aged care settings where access to care can be limited."

The Guild highlighted that the reform will help improve access for many patients and comes as the Pharmacy Board of Australia prepares to make a recommendation to health ministers on a nationally consistent pharmacist prescribing framework.

Health Services

“More services & support. Better access. Stronger community care.”

Ruthanne Jaja, TerryWhite Chemmart, Macquarie Street



TerryWhite Chemmart.

Dedicated to Care



Dispensary Corner

IN A development that is both impressive and mildly unsettling, a robot can now fill a prescription in under a minute.

A Silicon Valley startup called Queue revealed this week that it has built the world's first fully autonomous robotic pharmacy.

Instead of a pharmacist counting and dispensing pills, the entire process is handled by a robotic kiosk, which can apparently fill a prescription in 60 seconds or less.

It accepts sealed bottles of medication, identifies the pills using computer vision, counts them, verifies the prescription, and then dispenses the medication automatically.

The kiosk supports around 250 of the most commonly prescribed medications in the US and can dispense up to 600 pills per minute.

According to Queue, the system has the potential to reduce pharmacy dispensing costs by up to 96%, helping to address pharmacist shortages and improve access in areas that have lost local pharmacies.

Despite the apparent success of the technology, regulatory approval remains a major hurdle, with laws in many US states still requiring a licensed pharmacist to perform the final verification before handing prescriptions to patients.



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