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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of industry news, plus a full page from **MediChoice**.

The right choice

NOVA Pharmaceuticals' **MediChoice** range of analgesics and cough and cold remedies are a cost-effective solution for winter ills.

For a special deal see **p3**.

Opella boosts decarbonisation

OPELLA healthcare company is delivering a major site decarbonisation project at its North Brisbane facility, thanks to \$1.94 million in funding from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

By leveraging heat pump electrification for dehumidification, the initiative is projected to achieve an annual reduction of around 1,200 tonnes of CO₂, with an only 2% increase in electrical consumption.

The site already operates on 100% renewable electricity, including 2,700 solar panels, providing around 22% of the site's total electricity.

The B Corp certified company behind brands such as Nature's Own, Ostelin and Cenovis said this marks a significant milestone that helps to achieve its net-zero goals.

Guild: "Zero tolerance for PBS fraud"

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has issued a strongly worded statement against PBS fraud in response the conviction of suspended pharmacist Ben Huynh, who fronted Parramatta Local Court on Fri last week.

According to a report in *The Daily Telegraph*, Huynh pleaded guilty to fraudulently obtaining \$5.1m by using the details of over 200 patients to make almost 20,000 false PBS claims between Jul 2014 and Oct 2023.

"Today's article in *The Daily Telegraph* about PBS fraud is extremely abnormal but nonetheless deeply shocking and concerning," a Guild spokesperson said.

"Authorities should throw the book at those involved - there should be zero tolerance for PBS fraud," they continued.

"This behaviour is completely unacceptable and does not reflect the values, standards and professionalism of the pharmacy profession in Australia."

The Guild pointed out that this appears to be an isolated incident, "and does not reflect the world class primary health care provided by the overwhelming majority of community pharmacists".

It also stated that the scale of this fraud "does not compare in scale or impact to the widespread and well-documented fraud seen in other parts of the healthcare system, including within Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) programs".

"That being said, no fraud is



acceptable," the Guild reiterated.

Huynh operated the Cabramatta East Day and Night Pharmacy and was first arrested in 2023 and charged with "obtaining a financial advantage by deception".

Several luxury cars were seized and his pharmacist registration was suspended (**PD** 08 Jan 2024).

He remains on conditional bail and will face Parramatta District Court next month when a sentencing date will be set - he could face up to 10 years in jail.

"The Pharmacy Guild of Australia supports strong regulatory oversight and will continue to work closely with authorities to ensure the integrity of the profession is upheld," it concluded. **KB**

New HPV resource for pharmacists

PHARMA company MSD has created an online educational resource designed to provide information and support pharmacists during in-practice consultations about human papilloma virus (HPV).

It offers an easy-to-understand explanation of HPV and how it is transmitted, information on certain HPV-related cancers and diseases and addresses misconceptions about HPV.

Written in patient-friendly language for diverse age groups, pharmacists can reference or share the resource directly with their patients.

Nearly all sexually active people will have an HPV infection at some point in their lives MSD noted, and helping normalise conversations about HPV can help consumers feel more in control of their health.

The resource is **HERE**.

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Dispensary Corner

THE latest health and fitness trend sweeping the streets of New York - almost literally - is plogging.

It gets your heart rate up - but not too much - and your blood pumping, and reduces muscle stiffness.

In addition, the social aspect delivers mental health benefits.

So what is plogging?

A portmanteau of jogging and the Swedish phrase "plocka upp" - meaning "pick up" - the activity involves people coming together armed with garbage bags and gloves and stopping to pick up litter as they slowly jog along.

The eco-friendly fitness activity is often tied in with major running events, such as the New York City marathon, with entrants rocking up a couple of days beforehand to clear the path while running off some pre-race nerves.

As any long-distance runner will attest, there are benefits to slowing down.

"Plogging tends to produce a lower heart rate than jogging because of the stopping to pick up trash," running coach Jason Fitzgerald told *The New York Post*.

"This can be a good thing, as it keeps runners in easier aerobic zones, burns more fat, is more sustainable and is easier to recover from."

Another benefit is building leg strength as you bend down to pick rubbish up from the ground - think squats and lunges.

Finally, there's that feel-good factor of doing something constructive for the community.

OZ-ABCD key to harm reduction

A **MULTIDISCIPLINARY** team of healthcare professionals and medication safety experts have developed the first national consensus list of medicines with a high risk of harm in Australian residential aged care, which can be identified with the mnemonic OZ-ABCD.

Researchers identified 15 medications or medication classes that carry a significant risk of serious harm or death if misused or used in error, and require specialised monitoring in aged care settings.

The team noted that while health professionals and health service organisations are required to have systems in place to identify and mitigate the risks associated with high-risk medications specific to their setting, existing high-risk medication lists are not tailored to the unique and complex needs of aged care.

Dr Amanda Cross, pharmacist and a senior research fellow from the Centre for Medicine Use and Safety at the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, said the "OZ-ABCD" mnemonic she developed fills a "critical



void" in Australia's aged care safety resources.

"The OZ-ABCD tool gives busy clinicians and aged care staff a simple, memorable way to identify high-risk medications and ensure systems and monitoring are in place to keep residents safe," Dr Cross said.

The OZ-ABCD mnemonic stands for Opioids, Z-drugs and benzodiazepines, Antipsychotics and lithium, Blood thinners, Chemotherapeutic agents and methotrexate, and Diabetes agents with high risk of hypoglycaemia.

The team said the tool will support better education and clinical practice, ultimately reducing the incidence of preventable medication-related injuries among vulnerable older Australians.

Read the paper [HERE](#). KB

National Pharmacies appoints new CCO

SENIOR retail executive Alex Palin has been appointed chief customer officer for National Pharmacies, commencing the role today.

Hailing from London, Palin has worked in commercial leadership roles in Australia and the UK for the past 15 years, and has extensive merchandise and retail management experience.

Most recently in Adelaide, Palin held the role of general manager merchandise for Viva Energy

Australia, and previously worked as senior category manager with the Coles group.

Welcoming Palin to the group, National Pharmacies CEO Mark Smith said his skills and experience "will help strengthen our multiple offerings in-store and online and support our continued focus on delivering greater access to trusted, high quality optical, health and wellbeing services for our members and customers."



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Meg Brideson**, managing director at Willach Australia.



Pharmacy automation: Funding pathways explained

PHARMACY automation is becoming increasingly essential as Australian pharmacies face rising workloads, compliance demands and staffing shortages.

With robotic systems costing between \$75,000 and \$300,000, understanding practical financing pathways is key for owners considering this investment.

Options include:

Paying cash, which provides full ownership and allows depreciation and GST credits, though it may reduce available working capital.

Chattel mortgages, which offer up to 100% financing with 5-7 year terms and optional balloon payments, helping manage cash flow while retaining ownership.

Borrowing against property equity - this enables longer terms and flexible extra repayments, though this may tie up equity needed for future purchases.

Traditional business loans - these allow redraw of extra payments without new applications but may extend beyond the robot's useful life.

Ultimately, the right choice depends on each pharmacy's financial position and long-term goals, and seeking early professional advice is recommended.

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