

Today's issue of PD

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

Vyvgart approved for CIDP

GLOBAL immunology company Argenx has announced the ARTG registration of Vyvgart (efgartigimod alfa) SC pre-filled syringe as a monotherapy for the treatment of adult patients with progressive or relapsing active chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy (CIDP) after prior treatment with corticosteroids or immunoglobulins.

CIDP is a rare, severe and progressive autoimmune disease affecting around 3,000 Australians.

The drug belongs to a class of medicines known as neonatal Fc receptor (FcRn) inhibitors, which block the FcRn protein in the blood to accelerate the clearance of harmful immunoglobulin G (IgG) autoantibodies believed to play a role in CIDP.

It is the first therapy with a novel mechanism of action to be approved for CIDP patients in more than 30 years, and marks an important step in addressing unmet needs in this patient group.

Vyvgart was also approved for myasthenia gravis (gMG) this year (PD 10 Mar).

PSA recognises SA/NT excellence

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has recognised excellence in South Australian and Northern Territory pharmacy with the 2026 awards for outstanding pharmacists.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Grant Kardachi, recognised for his significant contribution to the pharmacy profession for over five decades.

As a highly respected leader, advocate and mentor, Kardachi has played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary practice across Australia.

“Widely regarded as a pioneer of consultant pharmacy, Grant was a key player in the 1996 Community Pharmacy Model Practices Project, leading to the introduction of Home Medicines Reviews and Residential Medication Management Reviews,” the PSA noted.

“These essential healthcare services have transformed medicines stewardship and continue to improve the safe and effective use of medicines for Australians.”

Dr Paul Tait was awarded Pharmacist of the Year 2026, recognising his outstanding leadership in digital health, palliative care, research and



integrated care, and in particular for strengthening pharmacists' roles within integrated multidisciplinary care teams.

Early Career Pharmacist of the Year was awarded to Stephanie Lee, who is based in Bordertown SA and was recognised for innovation, expanded scope service delivery, and leadership in rural healthcare.

As the first community pharmacist in SA to administer long-acting injectable buprenorphine, she has significantly improved access to evidence-based treatment for opioid dependence, reducing barriers to care and supporting safer, more dignified patient outcomes.

Li Ann Ching was named Intern Pharmacist of the Year for her outstanding performance and professionalism throughout her intern year, demonstrating a strong commitment to patient-centred care and expanded pharmacy services, including vaccination, heart health checks, travel consultations and hospital-to-home discharge reviews.

Finally, Matthew Weimann, who is currently completing his intern year at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, was presented with the prestigious PSA Gold Medal for his exceptional



academic achievement.

The medal is awarded to the student with the highest-grade point average above 6.25, studying a Bachelor of Pharmacy at the University of South Australia, and is given out only when a student meets these criteria.

Pictured: Li Ann Ching, Dr Paul Tait, Matthew Weimann, Grant Kardachi and Stephanie Lee.

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**.

Generic Health to trade as Lupin AU

GENERIC Health has announced it will operate as Lupin AU for all trading activities from 02 Apr 2026.

The transition marks an important step in the evolution of the business as it aligns more closely with global parent company, Lupin.

“By aligning under a single global brand, we are better positioned to deliver a more consistent experience and to leverage Lupin's international presence, capabilities, and reputation for quality, while continuing to serve the Australian market with the same dedication and reliability that Generic Health is known for,” a spokesperson stated.

NOT JUST FLU. THERE'S WHOOPING COUGH TOO

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Help prevent whooping cough as well as the flu¹

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

AS LONELINESS is increasingly recognised as a major public health threat, modern technology has provided many a happy New Yorker with a solution.

ElliQ is an AI-powered companion robot helping older people age in place, and the New York State Office of Aging has provided more than 900 people with the device for free.

The robots, which look more table-lamp than humanoid, are designed for older adults who live alone and are looking for companionship to combat loneliness while maintaining an independent lifestyle.

While capable of answering questions about the weather or playing music, ElliQ proactively starts conversations throughout the day, and builds on previous chats to create a deeper connection with the person.

"Every morning, ElliQ senses when the older adult enters the room, greets them with a warm good morning, and asks how they slept, follows up on how they feel and what they plan for the day," Dor Skuler, the CEO and co-founder of Intuition Robotics, which makes the device, told the *New York Post*.

"That small moment often opens the door to a real conversation," he continued.

It also provides suggestions for thousands of activities to keep users engaged, from brain games, mindfulness sessions, customised workout programs, painting and poetry.

The program reports a 94% reduction in loneliness, along with a boost to overall wellbeing.

FPA backs pharmacists

FAMILY Planning Australia (FPA) supports pharmacists working to their full scope of practice - including prescribing hormonal contraceptives - but stated this should not replace a client's ongoing care with their primary care provider.

"We know initiatives like pharmacy prescribing of contraceptives can increase access to care and essential medications, with a range of models currently being trialled or rolled out across Australia," CEO Sue Shilbury (pictured) told *Pharmacy Daily*.

"While we encourage people to maintain a relationship with a GP for their ongoing care, we recognise that these initiatives may also support people when a visit to their regular GP is not possible - for example, women in regional areas can have greater difficulty getting timely and affordable care near where they live."

In recognising potential health and safety risks linked with hormonal contraceptives, Shilbury reinforced the need for healthcare workers prescribing contraceptives



to have appropriate training, and have measures in place to protect patient safety, confidentiality and contraceptive choice.

"It's essential that pharmacists are adequately trained and have access to up-to-date guidelines in determining whether the supply or resupply of contraception is appropriate and safe, or whether the patient should be referred to a doctor for further assessment," Shilbury said.

"Quality, best-practice training and continued professional development are key to safe, successful implementation of pharmacist prescribing of hormonal contraceptives, and this function should not replace a client's ongoing care with their GP or primary care provider," she concluded. *KB*

Closing the Gap PBS scheme boosts uptake

THE Closing the Gap (CTG) Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-Payment Program, implemented in 2010, has boosted prescription medication use and reduced out-of-pocket spending among Indigenous Australians, according to research published in *JAMA Health Forum*.

The policy was initially applied to First Nations people with chronic diseases, but was extended to nearly all Indigenous Australians in 2020, and reduced prescription co-payments from \$33.30 to \$5.40 for general

patients and no cost for those with concessional status.

Program uptake increased from 24% in 2012 to 68% in 2022, with higher uptake among concessional patients.

The annual number of scripts accessed per person increased from an average of 16.7 in 2012 to 23.1 in 2022, while average annual out-of-pocket costs declined from \$144 to \$109.

"These results suggest modest progress in reducing inequities in access," the researchers concluded - read the study [HERE](#).



Weekly Comment

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



When is the right time to introduce a dispensing robot?

THIS often comes down to recognising key operational pressures. Pharmacies may reach this point when manual dispensing begins limiting growth or accuracy, or sacrificing patient services.

Recruiting and retaining staff might be harder, or staff are spending time on repetitive tasks that add no value.

Picking errors, or struggling to manage growing prescription volumes may be experienced.

Automation can provide immediate relief.

Robotic solutions assist streamline workflows by improving stock control, reducing errors, and freeing pharmacists to focus on clinical services and patient care.

Introducing a robot is ideal when planning a store refit or relocating, as automation can significantly reduce your storage footprint and improve layout efficiency.

Ultimately, the right time is when a pharmacy wants to increase efficiency, enhance safety, and create capacity for new services.

Automation is not just a technology upgrade or saving a head count, it is a strategic investment in long-term sustainable growth and better patient outcomes.

To learn more, [CLICK HERE](#).

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