



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Thursday, 11th January 2024

A more automated version of *Today's News* will be provided on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. It will still capture the main media stories, but will not include an Executive Summary. The report will be emailed to subscribers at the later time of 7:30 am.

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister Wells](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#)
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LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 1) reports a Nowra man shot dead in a police stand-off after holding doctors and medical centre staff hostage was known to authorities due to increasing concerns for his mental health. *Also reported by:* [Sydney Morning Herald](#)
- The [Courier Mail](#) (page 3) reports COVID subvariants XBB. 1.5 and JN.1 have driven a "prolonged and overlapping" wave of infections in Queensland, with more than 300 currently hospitalised. *Also reported by:* [Courier Mail](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle](#)
- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 4) reports Victoria's government is being urged to adopt a real-time drug alert system in line with international best practices after people nine overdosed at a music festival last weekend. *Also reported by:* [9News](#)
- The [Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 5) reports the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia are considering updating packaging warnings on asthma

medication montelukast, with more than 200 adverse events associated with the drug over the past decade. *Also reported by:* [The Age](#)

- The [Herald Sun](#) (page 5) reports Victoria has released a new education program aimed at cutting vaping in 12 to 15-year-olds, but health experts say even younger children are becoming addicted to vapes.
- The [Adelaide Advertiser](#) (page 9) reports the family of a 54-year-old man who died after a 10-hour wait for an ambulance has called on South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas to fast-track election promises and fix the state's ramping crisis. *Also reported by:* [ABC Online](#)
- The [Courier Mail](#) (page 10) reports the Australian Medical Association Queensland has called for a public education campaign on services available at urgent care clinics, saying patients are at risk of accessing the wrong service due to ongoing confusion about the role of the new facilities.
- [The Mandarin](#) reports an advisory group to Health Minister Mark Butler will help reform access to digital mental health services in a bid to end system fragmentation and bring digital resources in line with National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards by July 2025

MINISTER BUTLER

Government cost-cutting means rural mental health suffers

West Australian, General News, 11/01/2024, Richard Taylor, Page 34

Where I'm from, in the WA Wheatbelt, farmers are at the mercy of a hostile climate, economic uncertainty, surging costs of living and business, supply chain disruption, and international hostilities. They are reaching breaking point. [...] As a clinical psychologist with a bulk-billing practice, I have had many patients reach Mark Butler's psychological cliff after he slashed Medicare rebated sessions from 20 to 10 sessions.

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Patients struggle to find a GP as clinic's closure looms

Burnie Advocate, General News, 11/01/2024, Libby Bingham, Page 3

Concerned patients at the East Devonport Medical Centre (EDMC) struggle to find nearby GPs accepting new patients, let alone one that bulk bills. [...] A spokesperson for federal health minister Mark Butler said the EDMC closure was a commercial decision, and he was focused on patients having access to a GP in Devonport, working with the provider, local government and state government to do this.

Also reported by: [The Advocate \(Burnie\)](#) [\(Online\)](#).

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Archer calls for state healthcare action

Launceston Examiner, General News, 11/01/2024, Stephanie Dalton, Page 2

Federal MP for Bass Bridget Archer has taken aim at the federal government, calling for urgent action after new data depicted a dire situation for Tasmania's bulk billing rates. [...] The data, however, has been dismissed as incomplete by federal Health Minister Mark Butler.

Also reported by: [Burnie Advocate \(Burnie\)](#).

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All up in smoke

My Weekly Preview, General News, 11/01/2024, Page 16

Australia is losing ground on tobacco control, lagging behind the rest of the world, as vaping and cigarette marketers up their game. It's no secret that e-cigarettes are a dangerous and addictive trend among our youth. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler says the laws are needed to ensure a generation of new smokers do not start.

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New clinic relieves Logan Hospital pressures

MyCity Logan, Other, 10/01/2024, Chris Manning

Pressure on Logan Hospital's emergency department has reportedly eased thanks to the recently established urgent care clinic at Browns Plains. Federal health minister Mark Butler on Tuesday said that non-urgent and semi-urgent presentations at the hospital were down 10% since the clinic opened last August.

[Read More](#)

Huge change to Medicare proposed - but it could cost taxpayers an extra \$12billion a year

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 10/01/2024, Brett Lackey

Free dental care for all Australians under a \$12billion a year expansion of Medicare has been proposed to the federal government. A senate inquiry into the dental care system in Australia has been handed to Health Minister Mark Butler who will be required to respond when Parliament returns for the year. Currently, patients are required to privately pay for any dentist visits and treatments, with the exception of children under 17 who meet eligibility requirements and some concession card holders.

[Read More](#)

Fresh national approach to navigate digital mental health support

The Mandarin, Other, 10/01/2024, Melissa Coade

A national approach to help people access digital mental health services based on their level of distress will be developed by a consortium, which will also ensure all commonwealth-backed services meet minimum standards. [...] Butler announced the \$456.7 million funding to Lifeline's crisis support, Beyond Blue and Kids Helpline in a joint statement with assistant minister for mental health Emma McBride last month.

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Exempt genetic test results if My Health Record seven-day rule scrapped, colleges say

Australian Doctor, Other, 10/01/2024, Rachel Carter

Pathologists and GPs oppose a plan to let patients access all pathology and imaging results instantly. Anatomical pathology, cytopathology and genetic tests should be excluded from a government plan to remove the seven-day delay on patients viewing results in My Health Record, medical colleges say. Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler called the default seven-day delay "a barrier to good clinical practice" before his department consulted on changes late last year. The changes could involve patients accessing pathology and imaging results as soon as doctors uploaded them.

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New COVID-19 variant drives festive season surge

HealthTimes, Other, 10/01/2024

NSW and Victoria are recording a spike in COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations as emerging variant JN.1 drives a wave of infections. Health officials say while the strain is not necessarily more infectious than those before it, Christmas and New Year celebrations have helped it to rapidly become prevalent in the country. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler described the summer increase as part of a "regular cycle" of waves caused by new Omicron sub-variants.

[Read More](#)

New year, same old drug shortages

The Medical Republic, Other, 10/01/2024, Holly Payne

Australia has started off 2024 with almost 450 drugs in short supply, including a popular ADHD medicine. [...] While the TGA is reportedly working on section 19A exemptions for overseas-registered alternatives, Palliative Care Australia, the Australian and New Zealand Society for Palliative Medicine, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia and Palliative Care Nurses Australia have written to Health Minister Mark Butler calling for a new approach to managing medicine discontinuation.

[Read More](#)

Labor has been in office long enough now to stop blaming the last mob

PS News, Other, 10/01/2024, Chris Johnson

Labor has now been in power federally for 18 months and we have a new year ahead. So, is it too much to ask that all the problems and difficulties facing the nation are not continuously and endlessly blamed on the former government? [...] Health Minister Mark Butler told news outlets it was the Coalition's fault that Australians have reduced access to bulk-billing doctors.

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Channel 9, Nine News: First at Five, 10/01/2024, Monika Kos

Interview with Lisa Fernandez, Hammond Legal, on a Bassendean local making headline claiming she suffers severe asthma because of her neighbours smoking on the border of their two properties. Maggie Snell is now campaigning to regulate second-hand smoke in private spaces. Fernandez says she commends the Federal Government and Health Minister Mark Butler for putting particular measures against e-cigarettes in place.

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ABC Radio Darwin , Late Breakfast, 10/01/2024, Rick Hind

Interview with Dr Alex Wodak, Board Member, Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association, regarding Australia's crackdown on vaping making nicotine vapes illegal and . banning the importation of disposable vapes. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler announced the ban in November last year, explaining the reasons behind it to prevent young people from taking up vaping, citing research that says young people who vape are three times more likely to take up smoking, and they're the only group in society where smoking rates are going up. Wodak says unfortunately what Butler is saying is not supported by the evidence because it is not clear from those studies whether vaping is the cause or is just correlated with it.

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RSN927, The Breakfast Club, 10/01/2024, Andrew Bensley

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says authorities are closely monitoring a new COVID strain, which is becoming more dominant in the community. JN.1 can evade antibodies and is believed to be behind a rapid rise in hospitalisations over the past few weeks. Butler says it doesn't appear to be a cause for concern, but they're keeping an eye on its spread.

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MINISTER WELLS

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

Fresh national approach to navigate digital mental health support

The Mandarin, Other, 10/01/2024, Melissa Coade

A national approach to help people access digital mental health services based on their level of distress will be developed by a consortium, which will also ensure all commonwealth-backed services meet minimum standards. [...] Butler announced the \$456.7 million funding to Lifeline's crisis support, Beyond Blue and Kids Helpline in a joint statement with assistant minister for mental health Emma McBride last month.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

Loot for pollies? Sport events just the ticket

Herald Sun, General News, 11/01/2024, Jade Gailberger, Page 18

What our elected officials are receiving Tickets to the Australian Open and AFL matches, Qantas and Virgin airport lounge memberships and Foxtel subscriptions are the most popular gifts being accepted by Victorian MPs and Senators. [...] As Matildas fever spread across the nation, Defence Minister Richard Marles, Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney, Independent MP Zoe Daniel and Liberal MP Aaron Violi scored free tickets to games, while others got scarfs, pins and flags.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#).

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

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DEPARTMENT

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CORONAVIRUS

Plant-based diet 'cuts risk of getting COVID'

Australian Financial Review, General News, 11/01/2024, Tom Burton, Page 3

Vegetarians are 39 per cent less likely to contract COVID-19 than omnivores, according to Brazilian research published in the British Medical Journal of Nutrition, Prevention, & Health. University of San Paulo medical researchers were unable to show a dir...

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [West Australian \(Perth\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#), [Australian Financial Review \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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New booster recommended to combat 2024 COVID wave

Canberra Times, General News, 11/01/2024, Kerem Doruk, Page 9

There may be a new variant in town, but COVID-19 is no longer a disease of national significance. And pharmacies across Canberra are still accepting walk-in vaccinations for 2024. While the new variant, JN.1, has contributed to a sharp increase in hospitalisations in NSW and Victoria, ACT Heath said it had not observed a similar trend.

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Latest strain is 'no worse than flu'

Daily Telegraph, General News, 11/01/2024, Angira Bharadwaj, Page 8

Healthy Australians under the age of 50 do not need a booster to fight the latest wave of Covid, as experts claim the newest strain of the virus is no more dangerous than the flu. As Covid cases once again spike in Australia and around the world, epidemiologists have cautioned against panic, saying the chance of dying from the virus sits at the same risk level as the flu.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#).

Covid double whammy

Courier Mail, General News, 11/01/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 3

Hundreds of Queenslanders are in hospital with Covid-19 as the wave that began in October has unexpectedly persisted, leading to a double whammy of two subvariants crossing paths. The wave was initially driven by XBB. 1.5, but since early December the JN. 1 subvariant has emerged and is now becoming dominant. Previous waves have peaked at six weeks but the current wave is still going strong after 12 weeks.

Also reported by: [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#).

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Covid sparks call for masks

Hobart Mercury, General News, 11/01/2024, Fergus Ellis, Page 14

NSW health authorities are urging people to wear a mask if they show Covid symptoms as a new wave of infection sweeps parts of the country. The state has recorded its highest level of the virus in a year, with more than 17 per cent of PCR tests returning positive results. Descendants of subvariant Omicron, EG.5 and JN.1 are quickly becoming the most dominant strains of Covid across the state, increasing case numbers.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Darwin\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Townsville\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Geelong\)](#).

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What you need to know about the JN.1 variant, blamed for some of Australia's 'highest levels of COVID in a year'

ABC Online, Other, 10/01/2024, Leonie Thorne and Emily Laurence

Several states have warned of another COVID wave driven by a new variant called JN.1. New South Wales chief health officer says the variant is partially to blame for the state's "highest level of COVID in a year", while Victoria's health department says the variant has contributed to an "increase in community transmissions along with hospitalisations of COVID cases".

Also reported by: [9News \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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ABC News, News Breakfast, 10/01/2024, Michael Rowland and Emma Rebellato

There's been a spike in COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations across NSW and Vic recently and it has health authorities concerned. They say that the new emerging JN.1 subvariant of the virus has infected many people and led to a rise in hospitalisations.

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Channel 10, 10 News First, 10/01/2024, Hugh Riminton

There are enough Queenslanders seriously ill with COVID-19 to fill a mid-sized hospital. The sixth wave is now in its 12th week after two variants collided as the state celebrated Christmas. Doctors are warning the virus likely still hasn't peaked.

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Channel 7, Sunrise, 10/01/2024, Monique Wright and Mark Beretta

Sydney locals are this morning being warned to stay on high alert, with the state reporting its highest level of Covid in a year. More than 1000 people were hospitalised with the new JN.1 variant of COVID. It's a sub-variant of Omicron and it's no more dangerous or deadly than any other variant but it does spread much faster.

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As rates of COVID-19 surge, going vegetarian might help reduce people's chances of catching the virus, according to research published in the British Medical Journal. A global study of more than 700 people found those with predominantly plant-based diets were 39% less likely to develop the disease. However, researchers acknowledge the study was merely observational and couldn't prove anything for certain.

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Call to lift ban on foreigners doing trade apprenticeships

Australian Financial Review, General News, 11/01/2024, Julie Hare, Page 5

Worsening skills shortages in construction that could undermine national goals to build 1.2 million homes could be resolved if trade apprenticeships were made available to international students, experts say.

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Volunteers provide social support to aged care patients in this ED

HelloCare, Other, 10/01/2024, Bianca Iovino

These hospital volunteers understand that non-clinical supports are just as important as clinical ones! While medication management, record keeping and observations are important, sometimes just having someone to talk to or a little treat outside of the regular set menu does the world of good.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Eating late can put on weight

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 11/01/2024, Alice Callahan, Page 28

Many of us reach for comfort foods like ice cream and leftover takeaway after a long day. But if you make late-night snacking a regular habit, it could have unintended consequences on your health, experts say. According to a recent study of the eating habits of more than 34,000 US adults, nearly 60 per cent said it was normal for them to eat after 9pm.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#).

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Eight-year-olds vaping, health boss warns

Herald Sun, General News, 11/01/2024, Lily McCaffrey, Page 5

Victorian children as young as eight are being offered e-cigarettes and 10-year-olds are calling Quitline in tears, the chief executive of VicHealth has revealed. It comes as a new education program to curb vaping among Victorian schoolkids in years 7 to 10 was released on Thursday. Dr Sandro Demaio said the program to prevent children from vaping and support those already addicted was "critical".

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Vaping supply ban in force as MP urges youth to stop habit

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 11/01/2024, Ben Loughran, Page 2

Bendigo's youth need to stop vaping to prevent potential health problems later in life, according to the city's federal member. Lisa Chesters has made an impassioned plea after a ban on the importation of disposable vapes into the country came into force on January 1. Citing the latest data from the Australian Secondary Schools Alcohol and Drug survey, she said one-in-eight 12 to 15 year-olds and one-in-five 16 to 17 year-olds had vaped in the last month.

My dentist charged me thousands for a mouth full of unnecessary fillings

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 10/01/2024, Carol Hart

The bathroom renovation was complete. Or so I thought. The floor tiles were the big ticket item. Handmade in Spain. Encaustic. Expensive. Bloody expensive. But you can't put a price on the beauty of hand painted Japanese Koi and lotus flowers. Besides, I was only doing this bathroom once, which, I reasoned, justified the extravagance.

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Sydney woman 'addicted to vaping' documents quitting journey

The Courier Mail, Other, 11/01/2024, Claudia Poposki

Jillian Clark never smoked cigarettes before she started to vape - because she wanted to "fit in". Now she's admitting her embarrassment. Australia's ban on vape importation has come into effect, meaning it's going to be harder for people to get their hands on the single-use devices. Jillie Clark, 25, began vaping three years ago. She never smoked cigarettes. Vaping had begun as a social thing.

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'I was shamed by my mother's group for having to stop breastfeeding'

Cairns Post, Other, 10/01/2024, Dominique Birouste

When Isabelle became a mum, she never imagined she couldn't breastfeed her baby. But after three months of low supply, cracked nipples, three cases of mastitis, weekly appointments with a lactation consultant and physio, and an 8mL drained abscess, her body and spirit were at absolute breaking point.

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Weight-loss products should not be sold to under-18s, experts warn

The Guardian, Other, 11/01/2024, Natasha May

Lexi Crouch was 14 years old when she began saving her pocket money to buy as many diet pills and products at the supermarket as she could get her hands on from celery tablets and appetite suppressants to skinny me tea influenced by 90s diet culture. At the same age, during the height of Melbourne's lockdowns, Rhea Werner witnessed her friends buying over-the-counter diet pills, following the advice of influencers. "It was so scary to see them on the screen, it looked like they were fading away basically," she says.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Raising eyebrows, and awareness, of below the belt cancers

Canberra Times, General News, 11/01/2024, Karen Hardy, Page 13

Who among us hasn't had a chuckle when we've seen the classic British pudding spotted dick on a menu? [...] And here's the rub, so to speak, the cookbook is raising vital funds for medical research into the "below the belt" cancers, such as testicular, penile, prostate, kidney and bladder cancers.

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AB loses his battle

Ballarat Courier, General News, 11/01/2024, Emily Sweet, Page 1

Adam Bridges was known as a larrikin, who loved to make people laugh. To friends, he was fondly known as AB, with the best sense of humor. His goal in life was to make people happy. [...] According to Bowel Cancer Australia, one in nine new bowel cancer cases (more than 1700 a year) occur in people under the age of 50.

Check your skin

Barrier Truth, General News, 10/01/2024, Melanie Gates, Page 6

Need a skin check? Cancer Council is urging people to get to know their skin because the sooner a skin cancer is identified, and treated, the better the chance of avoiding surgery or, in the case of a serious melanoma or other skin cancer, potential disfigurement or even death. It's important to get to know your skin and what is normal for you so that you notice any changes.

Also reported by: [Barrier Truth \(Online\)](#).

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Breast Screen Clinic in February

Barrier Truth, General News, 10/01/2024, Page 12

The breast screen clinic will be open in Broken Hill from Tuesday February 20 to Friday March 1. BreastScreen NSW provides free breast screening to all women over 40 to support the early detection of breast cancer. Deon Adamson, Manager, BreastScreen NSW (Greater Western), says a regular breast screen is one of the most important things women can do for their health.

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Asthma sufferer campaigning to regulate second-hand smoking on private properties

West Australian, Other, 10/01/2024, Gabrielle Becerra Mellet

Non-smokers are calling for greater controls over where people can smoke on their own property amid a nationwide crackdown on illegal vapes and e-cigarettes. A ban on importing single-use disposable vapes from January 1 was the latest clampdown measure implemented by the Federal Government. [...] Make Smoking History policy and research senior coordinator Caitlin Kameron is campaigning in the WA Cancer Council for change in the smoking prevention sector.

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ABC Radio Hobart, Statewide Mornings, 10/01/2024, John Xintavelonis

Interview with Dr Annette Barratt, Vice President, AMA Tasmania, regarding new rules that have come into play around the regulation of e-cigarettes or vapes. It's now illegal to import single-use vapes into Australia and from March, it will be illegal to import any non-therapeutic vapes at all. Barratt says they have been very much in favour of the changes. She adds they want vapes to disappear because there are no therapeutic benefits from vaping.

Interview continues on: [ABC Radio Hobart \(Hobart\)](#).

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PRIMARY CARE

Patients 'unclear' on new services

Courier Mail, General News, 11/01/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 10

Patient confusion over state satellite hospitals and misinformation on Urgent Care Clinics has prompted Queensland's peak medical body to call for an immediate public education campaign. Australian Medical Association Queensland president Maria Boulton said the operating system on these new government services was failing to take the necessary pressure off emergency departments.

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It's back to schedule at most hospitals

Daily Advertiser, General News, 11/01/2024, Dan Holmes, Page 5

Normal services will resume at three community hospitals in the Murrumbidgee Local Health District

(MLHD) after cuts were made over the Christmas period. Temporary service cuts were made to Berrigan, Boorowa, Batlow, Coolamon-Ganmain and Urana hospitals in December to enable some services to continue in the wake of staff shortages.

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Free dental will cost government \$11.6 billion each year, report finds

9News, Other, 10/01/2024, Mark Saunokonoko

Every year scores of Australians don't go to the dentist because of the cost. Now, in a new parliamentary report, the cost of giving people universal access to free dental has been carefully calculated: almost \$12 billion every year. Driven by the Greens, who have long rallied for better and more affordable access to dental care, the Parliamentary Budget Office has modelled eight options that would expand Medicare into dental, revolutionising

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Central Coroner to hold inquest into voluntary euthanasia scheme after Qld widower's death

Daily Mercury News, Other, 10/01/2024, Janessa Ekert

Euthanasia drugs and how they are dispensed will be the focus of an inquest before the Central Coroner after an elderly widower took a lethal dose prescribed for their terminally ill partner, in what is the first suspected abuse of the voluntary assisted dying scheme. The terminally ill partner had been approved to legally end her life under Queensland's VAD laws however their health deteriorated and they died in hospital without taking the drugs, which had been provided to them.

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St Vincent's Health Australia still determining what data taken by hacker

The Weekly Source, Other, 10/01/2024, Ian Horswill

The nation's largest Not For Profit health and aged care provider says last month's cyber attack has not impacted the delivery of the services to patients, residents, and the broader community in its hospital, aged care, and virtual and home health networks. "We are managing some important network disruptions as part of our remediation works," St Vincent's Health Australia said in its latest statement

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Channel 9, National Nine News, 10/01/2024, Aislin Kriukelis

QLD's peak health body is urging the Qld Government to expand its plan to improve emergency departments to ease ambulance ramping and prevent patients languishing in waiting rooms. But the health minister insists progress is being made, revealing an update on her latest plan.

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Channel 9, Today, 10/01/2024, Jayne Azzopardi and Clint Stanaway

Interview with Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister. Albanese says childcare costs have come down as a result of their measures and there are 58 Medicare urgent care clinics providing help right around the country right now. He adds it has made an enormous difference and hundreds of thousands of Australians have benefited from their cheaper medicines.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Death in police pressure cooker

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 11/01/2024, Dylan Hogarth, Page 7

SA's top cop says the death of an officer at Port Adelaide police station on Monday reveals the strength of the state's "blue family", but also sparks a conversation about the pressures police face. Acting

Police Commissioner Linda Williams' comments come after a respected detective brevet sergeant was found dead at the Port Adelaide station on Monday.

Also reported by: [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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'Kununurra is like the wild west'

West Australian, General News, 11/01/2024, Sarah Crawford, Page 8

A secret police dossier into alcohol-harm revealed that child neglect was so extreme in one East Kimberley town that an eight-year-old boy attempted suicide. And the confidential documents also blamed cash welfare payments for having fuelled liquor-induced chaos. In 2019 a senior paramedic provided a harrowing account to police of the appalling conditions he and his colleagues found children living in while attending callouts in Kununurra.

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Connections can save lives

Burnie Advocate, General News, 11/01/2024, Jess Flint, Page 4

Men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women, but Ulverstone's Greg Smith is seeking to flip the narrative around men's mental health on its head. "I think it's a bit of a myth that men don't talk," Mr Smith said. "We do talk, but it needs to be in the right environment and around the right people." Mr Smith is the founder of Men Care Too, a group which began as a way for blokes in caring roles to find connection.

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This little poddy is providing office support and motivation

Central Western Daily, General News, 11/01/2024, Page 2

In the past few months, visitors to Crookwell's Australian Agricultural Centre would have noticed something unusual for in an office, that is. A poddy lamb called Lily has provided an important service, helping students with motivation, companionship and stress relief. The organisation's chief executive officer Jo Marshall says she had stolen the hearts of many a visitor.

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How a 'curse' is inspiring change

Illawarra Mercury, General News, 11/01/2024, Nadine Morton, Page 36

Imagine bringing a curse onto your family, and putting their lives at risk. You wouldn't do it, would you? On a sunny spring day in Berkeley, Freddy Purcell, 42, and his dog Buff walk by Lake Illawarra. It's a place that soothes his soul. He grew up a couple of streets away and he's spent countless hours here walking, running and being with his family.

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Misty Farquhar: WA Labor all talk, little action on protecting LGBTIQ+ people

West Australian, Other, 10/01/2024, Misty Farquhar

One year ago, here in these pages, I wrote about the obstacles still faced by LGBTIQ+ people in WA, calling out the Government's lack of action despite a majority government committed to making WA "a safer and fairer place for everyone". At the time, I suggested that a whole of government approach would be a solid starting point for addressing these issues.

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Mental health grants awarded

Shepparton News Online, Other, 10/01/2024, Grace Carter

Twenty community-led organisations across Victoria will share in funding worth \$4.2 million as recipients of the 2023-25 Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants. The Victorian Government is aiming to build a more accessible mental health system for Victorians by awarding grants to organisations that support people with disabilities and multifaith, multicultural and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Suicide survivor now helping tradies with their mental health

4BC, Other, 10/01/2024, Jason Dasey

Coordinator of Supervisor Training Program at MATES in Construction QLD & NT, Justin Geange joined Jason Dasey on 4BC Summer Drive to chat about how he has been helping tradies deal with mental health struggles.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Freebirth interest on rise

Herald Sun, General News, 11/01/2024, Tamara McDonald, Page 13

Interest in controversial "freebirthing" is reportedly growing, as a newborn remained in hospital more than a week after being rushed there in a critical condition after being delivered in Ocean Grove. The baby was taken to Geelong hospital on Tuesday last week after what's understood to have been a freebirth.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Police kill gunman in hostage stand-off

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 11/01/2024, Perry Duffin, Page 3

An armed man has been shot dead by police outside a NSW medical centre after holding doctors and staff hostage and seizing a police ballistic shield in a tense stand-off. Senior police called it a tragic death both for the man and his loved ones and the police who had rushed to the scene.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Sydney\)](#).

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Centennial milestone for Tongala first responder

Shepparton News, General News, 11/01/2024, Georgia Tacey, Page 3

A Loddon Mallee Ambulance Victoria first responder has reached a significant milestone. Kirsten Wright, a community emergency response team volunteer in Tongala, is being celebrated for attending over 100 cases. The Tongala CERT tracks the number of cases its members attend, and team leader Anne Church said her daughter and fellow volunteer reached the milestone in December 2023.

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Signs of life

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 11/01/2024, Page 16

They've come from all around the world 81 new intern doctors are starting their careers at Townsville University Hospital, from places as far flung as China, Siberia, and Malaysia. We hope the tropics aren't too hard to adjust to for them, as Townsville tends to get a little warmer we're surrounded by the beautiful Coral Sea rather than the unforgiving Arctic.

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Graduates lead the way in healthcare

Shepparton News Online, Other, 10/01/2024, Adrienne Hartnett

Corowa High School graduates Zoe Dutton and Isabel Bush have emerged as standout success stories in the Murrumbidgee Local Health District's (MLHD) pioneering school-based traineeship program. The program, designed to seamlessly integrate practical healthcare experience with Higher

School Certificate (HSC) studies, has propelled the students toward promising careers while earning academic accolades.

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Nurses in Queensland who were stood down during the pandemic for refusing to get a Covid vaccine are being sacked despite the lifting of mandates

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 10/01/2024, Brett Lackey

Nurses in Queensland who were stood down during the pandemic for refusing to get a Covid vaccine are being sacked despite the lifting of mandates months ago. Ella Leach, secretary of the Nurses Professional Association QLD, was one of those who was recently notified through a letter she had been fired, even though she is seven months pregnant.

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Scope pilot update: “Get excited”

Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Other, 11/01/2024

Cate Whalan has been a pharmacist since 1995 and is part of the first tranche of pharmacists to undergo training and education for the Queensland scope of practice pilot due to be rolled out in March. As her group nears completion of their training, she reflects on what it's been like.

[Read More](#)

CAPS to hold next protest rally in Feb

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 10/01/2024

The Community and Pharmacy Support Group (CAPS) has organised another protest in Canberra on 06 Feb, to coincide with the first sitting day of Parliament, as it says negotiations for the Eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA) still remain uncertain. CAPS is urging the community to save the date, with the protest contingent upon the state of the 8CPA by the end of Jan.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

Permanent continued dispensing a must: PSA

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 10/01/2024, Michael Post

Temporary measures enabling pharmacists to provide PBS medicines to patients impacted by flooding in Victoria without a prescription are being welcomed, but the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PBS) wants them to be implemented on a permanent basis.

[Read More](#)

Patient costs going in wrong direction: Guild

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 10/01/2024, Michael Post

Annual increases to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) general and concessional co-payments are a step in the wrong direction, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia warns.

[Read More](#)

FTF teams up with Vitura for NVPs

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 10/01/2024

From the fields Pharmaceutical (FTF) has secured a strategic retail distribution partnership with Vitura Health for its vaping products. FTF CEO Wilhelm David said its distribution partnership strategically positioned the company, with its Wild by Instinct product lines specifically aligned to current and future regulatory approved, GP or nurse-practitioner prescribed, pharmacy-distributed model for nicotine vaping products (NVPs) in Australia.

[Read More](#)

MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Opposition grows to real-time pathology data sharing plan

InnovationAus, Other, 10/01/2024, Justin Hendry

A plan to make pathology reports immediately accessible through My Health Record is facing opposition from GPs and specialists, with three peak bodies warning the move could lead to misinformation and patient stress. The Royal College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and Royal Collage of Pathologists of Australasia (GCPA) this week joined the Australian Medical Association (AMA) in opposing the removal of a seven-day delay for uploads without exemptions for certain tests.

[Read More](#)

Accessibility concerns increase as bulk billing rates in Australia drop, report finds

SBS, Other, 10/01/2024, Omoh Bello

A new report has found the rate of bulk billing across Australia has dropped drastically within the last year. It's found fewer than one in four GP clinics now bulk bill all of their patients. A new report by online healthcare directory Cleanbill reveals that the national bulk billing rate for doctors accepting new patients now sits at 24.2 per cent.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

This is your fault, Mali

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 11/01/2024, Brad Crouch, Page 9

The family of disabled man, known as Eddie, who died after a 10-hour wait for an ambulance have hit out at Premier Peter Malinauskas, saying: "This is your fault." Eddie, 54, of Hectorville, had severe abdominal pains and was initially diagnosed as a low priority patient. After 10 hours, he was upgraded to priority 1 status and an ambulance arrived within four minutes of the final call but it was too late.

Also reported by: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#), [In Daily \(Online\)](#).

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SA woman lodges complaint with Royal Adelaide Hospital after elective heart surgery postponed

ABC Online, Other, 10/01/2024, Stephanie Richards

Jennifer Harris goes to bed each night fearing she will not wake up. The 51-year-old has a condition called mitral valve stenosis, which causes her heart valve to thicken and fluid to build up in her lungs, leaving her feeling exhausted, breathless, and phlegmy. "Essentially, if I get fluid in my lungs, I can drown in my sleep," she said.

Also reported by: [ABC Online \(Online\)](#).

[Read More](#)

ABC News, ABC Nightly News, 10/01/2024, Yvonne Yong

A patient suffering a potentially fatal heart condition has complained to the Royal Adelaide Hospital after it twice postponed her open heart surgery. While her surgery has now been rescheduled to Friday, she's concerned the South Australian health system is buckling under extreme pressure.

[Play Now](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 10/01/2024, Mike Smithson

The family of a disabled man who died after an agonising 10-hour wait for an ambulance has taken aim at SA Premier Peter Malinauskas. Ambulance ramping hit a record high in November, but response times to top-priority cases fell within the target range. The SA Opposition is still insisting the minister resigns.

[Play Now](#)

ABC Radio Adelaide, Breakfast, 10/01/2024, Sonya Feldhoff and Jules Schiller

A patient suffering from a heart condition has complained to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, which has postponed her open heart surgery. Jennifer Harris says she was due to have a heart valve replacement this week after being categorised as a priority one patient, but the operation has been delayed twice. Central Adelaide Local Health Network Acting CEO Kathryn Zeitz says Harris's surgery was postponed due to operational demands.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

No relevant coverage

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SPORT

Sonny on track to join ballkids at the Open

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 11/01/2024, Wendy Tuohy, Page 3

Even at the age of five, Sonny Rennison was clear that anyone can and should be able to participate fully in sport, "even if they're not in a wheelchair". "If they're standing up, if they have a disability ... anyone can play anything," he told the cameras at a VicSport breakfast six years ago, looking and sounding like the most optimistic boy in the world.

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Too many children do not know how to swim properly

Sydney Morning Herald, Editorials, 11/01/2024, Page 20

For a country that prides itself as being a swimming nation, it comes as a shock: the Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) estimates that 83 per cent of 12-year-olds cannot tread water for two minutes. And 40 per cent cannot freestyle or backstroke for 50 metres or even dog paddle 25 metres.

Also reported by: [Barrier Truth \(Broken Hill\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Demons player to fight lengthy cocaine ban

Age, General News, 11/01/2024, Peter Ryan, Page 2

Melbourne utility Joel Smith faces a two-year ban for testing positive to cocaine after the club's round 23 match last year against Hawthorn after Sport Integrity Australia rejected his bid for a three-month suspension. Two sources close to the situation, but who are unauthorised to speak on Smith's behalf, said he was likely to fight for his career through the appeals process on the basis that the substance was used out of competition and was not performance enhancing.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Melbourne\)](#), [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#), [7news.com.au \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#).

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Fans in the pink over cap

Daily Telegraph, General News, 11/01/2024, Jonathon Moran, Karlie Rutherford and Mikaela Wilkes, Page 23

The search for David Warner's baggy green may be over but the quest is on for a lucky sports fan to own the retiring cricketer's baggy pink and pink Test shirt. Warner, who just played his last Test series for Australia, is donating his prized final kit to the McGrath Foundation to help raise funds for breast cancer.

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No long faces over winning horse deal

Courier Mail, General News, 11/01/2024, Matthew Benns, Page 1

A horse walks into a bar with legendary trainer Gai Waterhouse and 15 Aussie business operators end up buying shares in him. And there were no long faces because Storm Boy, the colt Waterhouse sold, is favourite to win Saturday's \$3m Magic Millions 2yo Classic on the Gold Coast. Waterhouse led the colt off the float and went into full selling mode explaining how she always buys precocious horses because "they go early" and evoked the memory of her legendary trainer father Tommy Smith.

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Get games on track

Courier Mail, General News, 11/01/2024, Stephanie Bennett and Hayden Johnson, Page 1

South East Queensland mayors are demanding an end to the "political games" plaguing Brisbane's 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and warn time is running out to get the event back on track. Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner and the Council of Mayors South East Queensland say it is critical Premier Steven Miles refocuses the government to deliver the significant transport and generational infrastructure benefits residents were promised.

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Smashing personal goals

Ballarat Courier, General News, 11/01/2024, Alex Ford, Page 24

Ballarat cyclist Ben Oman almost went back-to-back at this year's Road National Championships, fighting through muggy and wet conditions. He came home with two silver medals in the men's transplant road race and time trial, part of the paracycling program. Oman was diagnosed with kidney disease some years ago and was put on the list for a transplant - in his case, his mother "jumped at the chance" to help out and donate one of her kidneys.

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Khawaja displays peace dove on shoes, bat in BBL cameo

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 10/01/2024

Usman Khawaja has finally had his chance to showcase the dove and olive branch symbols of peace in a BBL cameo innings for the Brisbane Heat. The imagery was displayed by the Heat captain on his shoes and on his bat in his knock of 14 from eight deliveries at the Gabba against Perth on Wednesday night.

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Gene therapy gives new hope for better lives

The Australian, General News, 11/01/2024, Natasha Robinson, Page 10

As DNA sequencing moves from the laboratory to the clinic, critically ill children will be the beneficiaries. When Maddison Elphick's son Hunter was diagnosed with the rare genetic disease Duchenne muscular dystrophy, despite the shock and devastation of the poor prognosis, there was a strange sense of relief.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#).

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How to stop disease before it takes hold

The Australian, General News, 11/01/2024, Natasha Robinson, Page 10

For months, sometimes even years, the body is sending silent signals even though symptoms may be years away. Until recently, we haven't had the methods to detect these messages, which are carried in the blood and body fluids within nanoscopic bubbles that contain a cocktail of genetic fragments, lipids and proteins.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#).

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The scientists using AI to transform their work

ABC Online, Other, 10/01/2024, Isabel Moussalli

Artificial intelligence and its potential has been disrupting everything from governments to classrooms and even Hollywood. But it's also transforming the way we work.

[Read More](#)

Hope for universal cancer screening test with tool that is 93% accurate at spotting 18 different tumours at their earliest stage

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 10/01/2024, Kate Pickles

A blood test analysing proteins in blood could one day be used to test for common cancers, new research suggests. Early trials of a new test found it could pick up 18 early-stage cancers, representing all major organs in the human body. Its developers say it takes them a step closer to developing a new generation of cancer screening tests that can be used across the population.

[Read More](#)

New DNA test can detect 18 different types of early stage cancers, scientists say

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 10/01/2024, Vishwam Sankaran

Scientists have developed a new DNA test that could detect 18 different types of early-stage cancers in a concept study representing all the major organs of the human body. The new findings could kick-start a new generation of screening tests for early detection of cancer , researchers say.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Location set for long-awaited Aboriginal health service

Western Advocate, General News, 11/01/2024, Rachel Chamberlain, Page 2

Bathurst has taken a big step towards having its own Aboriginal Medical Service. Bathurst Regional Council has given in-principle approval to the Bathurst Aboriginal Health Service Advisory Group (BAHSAG) to lease the Kelso Community Hub, where it would establish the new medical service.

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'They're engaging in life again': new world after ear surgery for children

Newcastle Herald, Other, 10/01/2024, Anna Falkenmire

When a little kid told their parents to "shut up" on Tuesday, it was music to their ears. It might seem an unusual reaction, but the child had just come out of a life-changing surgery at Lingard Private Hospital in Newcastle which let them hear the world at full volume. About 20 Indigenous children underwent a simple but essential procedure to remove liquid from their inner ear during a massive morning of operations.

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ABC Radio Sydney, Mornings, 10/01/2024, Suzanne Hill

Interview with Nikky LaBranche, University of Queensland's Sustainable Minerals Institute, on researchers at the University of Queensland who have developed a method of testing that could identify a wider range of deadly materials in identifying silicosis and other lung diseases. LaBranche says it gives a much better idea of what's going on in the environment and they are finding like particularly one of the, the, the reasons that engineered Stone has had this, um, this big issue is because a lot of those particles are very small and they can penetrate deeper into the lungs.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Pleas for packaging review on asthma drug

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 11/01/2024, Angus Thomson and Aisha Dow, Page 5

A common asthma drug used by children has been linked to three suicides and hundreds of other medical episodes since a federal government safety review six years ago, prompting a renewed push from families to add better warnings to packaging. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia are considering updating product information warning consumers about the link between drugs containing montelukast and neuropsychiatric side effects, after campaigning by families with children affected by the drug.

Also reported by: [Age \(Melbourne\)](#), [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#).

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A shroom with a view

Herald Sun, General News, 11/01/2024, Mandy Squires, Page 23

Australia's first dedicated psychedelic treatment clinic administering MDMA or magic mushrooms - is a step closer to opening after receiving ethics board approval. [...] Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration downscheduled MDMA and psilocybin last year, allowing approved psychiatrists to prescribe psychedelic medicines for specific mental health conditions from July 1, 2023.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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Perth biotech firm in ecstasy

West Australian, Business News, 11/01/2024, Page 29

Perth biotech Emyria has been granted approval for its psychiatrist to prescribe MDMA for posttraumatic stress disorder. Emyria chief executive Michael Winlo said PTSD affected about one million Australians, and with up to one-third of patients failing to benefit from conventional therapies there was a growing need for more effective treatments. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration has granted its psychiatry specialist an authorised prescriber status.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Perth\)](#), [The Australian \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Dr Nick Coatsworth joins GP telehealth company offering compounded semaglutide for weight loss

Australian Doctor, Other, 10/01/2024, Sarah Simpkins

The former deputy chief medical officer will advise on appropriate clinical governance. The \$100 million GP telehealth corporate Eucalyptus has recruited former deputy chief medical officer Dr Nick Coatsworth as a clinical governance adviser. [...] He also joined the Australian Patients Association as its health reform ambassador, where he warned the Medical Board of Australia not to "push too far" in

its crackdown on text-only consultations In December, the TGA issued a statement referring to compounded semaglutide prescribed via telehealth.

[Read More](#)

RACGP updates smoking cessation guidance as vaping crackdown begins

Australian Doctor, Other, 10/01/2024, Rachel Fieldhouse

Patients using nicotine vaping products should be prescribed devices with closed systems that cannot be refilled instead of open-system devices, according to provisional guidance from the RACGP. [...] While GPs could consider patient preferences for devices and products for current users, Professor Zwar recommended prescribing devices that met TGA standards.

[Read More](#)

Nurse suspended for two years after attempting to steal a cannula during hospital night shift

Australian Doctor, Other, 10/01/2024, Paul Smith

A nurse who was suspended for two years under emergency powers after stealing cannula equipment during a hospital night shift has been given the green light to return to work. [...] The nurse said that she and a nurse friend had paid \$680 so they could import the Glutanex Drip, a Schedule four poison which usually needs TGA approval and a doctor's prescription before being brought into Australia.

[Read More](#)

How to travel with medication

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 10/01/2024

For those who take medication regularly - especially if it's the life-saving kind - travelling can be stressful, and even dangerous. Being out of routine can increase the risk of forgetting a dose or doubling up. [...] You can find more information on the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) website.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Urgent OD alerts call

Herald Sun, General News, 11/01/2024, Shannon Deery and Brooke Grebert-Craig, Page 4

The Allan government is facing calls to implement a realtime emergency drug alert system immediately, ahead of one of the state's most notorious music festivals. Despite nine revellers overdosing on MDMA at Saturday's Hardmission Festival at Flemington Racecourse, a drug alert has not been issued by the Health Department.

Also reported by: [9News \(Online\)](#).

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FOOD STANDARDS

Aussie mum's urgent warning after revolting find inside iconic kids' snack

The Courier Mail, Other, 10/01/2024, Eleanor Katelaris

Imagine the horror: you're about to serve a snack to your toddler , only to discover something unthinkable within. This was the reality for one Aussie mum , who recently found a used band-aid in a tub of YoGo chocolate yoghurt, purchased from her local Coles. The unsuspecting Sydney woman

says she was just "moments away" from serving her one-year-old the seemingly harmless dessert, potentially exposing her child to black mould, which was covering the bandaid.

[Read More](#)

Microplastics found in 90% of burgers, steaks and chicken

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 10/01/2024, Stuti Mishra

Microplastics have been found in nearly 90 per cent of sources of proteins, including meat and plant-based, according to a new study that serves as a startling reminder of how prolific plastic pollution has become. While the presence of microplastics in commercial fish and shellfish has been known for long, there has been little research into terrestrial protein sources like beef and chicken that make up a large part of the Western diet.

[Read More](#)

Channel 7, Seven News, 10/01/2024, Rebecca Maddern

New research has revealed drinking water from plastic bottles could be hurting people's health. One litre of water was found to contain around 240,000 nanoplastic and microplastic particles. While the impact is still unknown, scientists say the fragments are so small they can pass directly into your bloodstream.

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AICIS

New parklands closed after child brings asbestos home

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 11/01/2024, Anthony Segaert, Page 5

Rozelle Parklands, the new green space that sits on top of the Rozelle Interchange, has been closed just 24 days after it opened because a parent discovered asbestos in mulch their child brought home from the playground. Transport for NSW yesterday put fencing around the park with signs warning against entry after two samples of mulch from around the playground area on Tuesday afternoon were found to have traces of asbestos.

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