



Minister Butler | Minister Wells | Assistant Minister McBride

| Assistant Minister Kearney | Assistant Minister McCarthy | Department

| Coronavirus | Ageing and Aged Care | Population Health

| Cancer, Hearing and Chronic Conditions | Primary Care

| Mental Health and Suicide Prevention | Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office

| Health Workforce | Technology Assessment and Access

| Medicare Benefits and Digital Health | Benefits Integrity

| <u>Health Systems Strategies</u> | <u>Sport</u> | <u>Health Economics and Research</u> |

First Nations Health | Office of Health Protection and Emergency Management

| Therapeutic Goods Administration | Office for Drug Control | Food Standards

AICIS

LINKS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- <u>The Age</u> (page 1) reports that three letters were sent to Emergency Services Minister Jaclyn Symes warning the minister that state's triple-zero service was receiving call volumes similar to Melbourne's thunderstorm asthma event every day a week before Nick Panagiotopoulos died. *Also reported by: Canberra Times Online*
- <u>Herald Sun</u> (page 1) reports that whistleblowers at Latrobe Regional health have called the hospital "the worst" they had ever worked at, claiming at least seven patients death could have been avoided.
- <u>The Courier Mail</u> (page 1) reports that former Meta product manager Frances Haugen has warned social media can have negative mental and physical impacts on children bellow the age of 14.
- <u>The Courier Mail (page 1)</u> reports that hundreds of primary school students at Rochedale State School in Brisbane could have been exposed to asbestos following the discovery of dust from contaminated ceiling tiles in 12 classrooms.
- <u>The Northern Territory News</u> (page 1) reports that the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's recently released report on acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease

reveals that the NT had the highest rate of diagnoses among First Nations people in 2022 than all other states and territories combined.

- <u>The Courier Mail</u> (page 2) reports that Premier Steven Miles has said new warm-up facilities, grandstand seating and an athletics track are part of the athletics legacy that the revamp of the QSAC as an Olympics venue will provide. *Also reported by: <u>Courier Mail, ABC Online</u>*
- <u>Courier Mail</u> (page 3) reports infectious disease experts have warned Australians to be careful over the Easter break, despite the decline in Covid cases.
- <u>The Sydney Morning Herald</u> (page 5) reports that a collaboration between University of Melbourne and biotech company Illumina is developing a blood test to speed up diagnosis of unknown cancers.
- **Daily Telegraph Online** reports that peak health bodies are calling for Victoria to implement an RSV immunisation program for babies after Queensland announced their immunisation program. The drug nirsevimab is currently not on the PBS list, with a Federal Health Department spokeswoman stating that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee needs to receive an application. *Also reported by: <u>Herald Sun</u>*

MINISTER BUTLER

The vape escape

The Nightly, General News, 25/03/2024, Sarina Andaloro, Page 6

Australian Border Force have seized more than half a million dollars worth of illegal vapes as they increase their crackdown on a growing black market. [...] The ABF crackdown comes as Health Minister Mark Butler last week introduced legislation to strengthen rules on vapes to prevent the importation, domestic manufacture, supply and commercial possession of non-therapeutic and disposable vapes.

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Australia's chance to lead the world in protecting children

Daily Liberal, General News, 26/03/2024, Steve Robson, Page 15

When federal Health Minister Mark Butler addressed the National Press Club at the beginning of May last year, the centrepiece of his speech was about vaping. The minister committed his government to strong action against the scourge of e-cigarette use.

Also reported by: <u>Central Western Daily (Orange)</u>, <u>Border Mail (Albury-Wodonga)</u>, <u>Western Advocate (Bathurst)</u>, <u>Canberra Times (Canberra)</u>, <u>Bendigo Advertiser (Bendigo)</u>, <u>Ballarat Courier (Ballarat)</u>, <u>Launceston Examiner</u> (<u>Launceston</u>), <u>Illawarra Mercury (Wollongong</u>)

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New MSAC Chair

Pharmacy Daily, General News, 25/03/2024, Page 1

Kidney disease research expert Prof Jonathan Craig of Flinders University was appointed Chair of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) last week. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler confirmed Craig's appointment for a four-year period, starting on 01 Apr.

Also reported by: Pharmacy Daily (Online)

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Psychiatry waitlist blow-outs driving desperate patients to ED 'time and again'

Australian Doctor, Other, 25/03/2024, Rachel Carter

Over 500 psychiatrists signed a letter to Mark Butler warning of a workforce crisis. "I can think of a case as recently as this week where an individual with bipolar was developing an acute manic relapse and tried to access his psychiatrist, but they had closed their books.

Read More

Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme transitioning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control

Medianet, Other, 25/03/2024

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), alongside partners the National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP) and Rural Doctors Network (RDN), is excited to be announced as the successful provider of the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme (PHMSS), as the scholarships transition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community control in mid-2024. In making the joint announcement with the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, Yanyuwa woman, Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy, said "In his role chairing the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Dr Arnold 'Puggy' Hunter devoted his life to improving health outcomes for First Nations Australians.

Read More

Government appoints experts as new chairs of two medical advisory committees

PS News, Other, 25/03/2024, Andrew McLaughlin

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has announced the appointment of two esteemed medical advisers from next month to committees that advise government on funding medicines, medical services, health programs and patient technologies. The appointees are cancer researcher and medical oncologist Professor Robyn Ward as chair of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC), and paediatric nephrologist and clinical epidemiologist Professor Jonathan Craig as chair of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC).

Read More

New vaping legislation introduced to Parliament

Retail World, Other, 25/03/2024, Nicholas Rider

The Australian government has introduced new vaping legislation to Parliament, said to deliver on the government's promise to protect children, young people and all Australians from the harms of vaping. [...] 'World leading' response Australian Minister for Health and Aged Care Mark Butler says the Australian government is taking a "world leading" response to stop the risk that vapes pose to the Australian community, especially young people.

Read More

GPs @ Parliament campaign kicks off

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 25/03/2024

A delegation of doctors has descended on Canberra for three days of meetings with the nation's leaders, demanding an overhaul of the ailing health system. RACGP President Dr Nicole Higgins, Federal Health and Aged Care Minister Mark Butler, and incoming RACGP CEO Georgina van de Water at Parliament House.

Read More

Channel 7, Seven News, 25/03/2024, Rosanna Mangiarelli and Will Goodings

A Seven News investigation has found a ban on imported vapes is working, but Border Force is now up against a black market that's getting sneakier. They've intercepted a major 2.5-tonne haul hidden in packages of clothing. Federal Health Minister Mark Butler says it is part of their comprehensive plan to stamp out the industry.

<u>Play Now</u>

ABC Far North, Breakfast, 25/03/2024, Charlie McKillop

Pre-recorded interview with Lisa Laird, cancer sufferer, regarding a fight for her life and the health system, the medical bureaucracy that has put potentially life-saving drugs out of reach for her. The drug Enhertu is only approved and was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in November for those patients diagnosed with HER2-positive breast cancer but for Laird and about 7000 other Australian women who have HER2-negative breast cancer, the same medication costs around \$13,000

per treatment. Laird says it's the last line of treatment for her and there's no other option. She adds she and Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter have written to Health Minister Mark Butler but they haven't heard from them yet.

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MINISTER WELLS

Fun and games over Olympic venues

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 25/03/2024, Page 8

Reports of the Brisbane 2032 Games' demise have been greatly exaggerated, according to Olympic powerbrokers. [...] Complaints about his plan had "echoed across the state", federal Sport Minister Anika Wells said.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

No relevant coverage

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ASSISTANT MINISTER KEARNEY

Govt funds research on health and climate

Canberra Times, General News, 26/03/2024, Lucy Bladen, Page 4

Researchers will be able to apply to receive grants from the federal government to undertake studies into how climate change is affecting health. [...] Federal Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney said the health system needed to be equipped to deal with serious health and wellbeing changes presented by climate change.

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The Zap: a comprehensive account of all the latest health and aged care news

Croakey, Other, 25/03/2024, Melissa Sweet

Pill testing programs, health workforce reform, Close the Gap Day, oral health, vaping and the new national lung cancer screening program are among issues highlighted in the latest edition of The Zap. [...]) Assistant Minister Ged Kearney introduced the niftily titled Health Legislation Amendment (Removal of Requirement for a Collaborative Arrangement) Bill into Parliament.

Read More

RACGP on The Hill for final pre-budget sitting days

The Medical Republic, Other, 25/03/2024, Holly Payne

Six weeks out from budget night, the GP college is on the ground taking last-minute meetings with the powers that be. [...] Last week, Assistant Health Minister Ged Kearney introduced a bill to parliament that would repeal the requirement for collaborative arrangements between nurse practitioners and doctors.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

No relevant coverage

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DEPARTMENT

Vic bubs miss out on lifesaving jab as virus spreads

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 25/03/2024, Sarah Booth

An immunisation approved by the nation's regulator last year is yet to be rolled out across Victoria despite other states moving forward, leaving babies vulnerable to the effects of RSV. [...] A Federal Health Department spokeswoman said they can only subsidise a medicine if the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee receives and then recommends an application.

Also reported by: <u>Herald Sun (Melbourne)</u>, <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>, <u>Herald Sun (Online)</u>, <u>Adelaide Now</u> (<u>Online)</u>, <u>The Mercury (Online)</u>, <u>Northern Territory News (Online)</u>

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CORONAVIRUS

Calls to prevent Easter suffering

Courier Mail, General News, 26/03/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 3

Recorded Covid cases are on the decline but infectious disease experts warn that the virus is highly unpredictable and the Easter break is not the time to be complacent. New data shows influenza cases are on the rise and last week there were nearly as many reported cases of the flu than Covid in Queensland.

Also reported by: Townsville Bulletin (Townsville)

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Covid paranoia victims deserve their sorry day

Daily Telegraph, General News, 26/03/2024, Rocco Loiacono, Page 29

Anthony Albanese went to the 2022 election promising a Covid royal commission. But in September last year he reneged on his promise, announcing instead a "special commission of inquiry", which will not scrutinise the devastating lockdowns, school closures, mask and vaccine mandates and border closures imposed by state and territory governments.

Also reported by: Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide)

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Governments still chasing millions from people who stayed in Australia's quarantine hotels

ABC Online, Other, 25/03/2024, Hannah Murphy

People forced to stay in hotels for weeks at a time to slow the spread of COVID-19 still owe at least \$70 million for bills racked up during their stays, according to Australia's state and territory governments. Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk wants Prime Minister Scott Morrison to provide more money and defence force support to manage international quarantine

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Jolly good

Age, General News, 26/03/2024, Noel Towell Kishor & Napier-Raman, Page 2

The Teflon run of Melbourne's favourite lefty, City of Yarra councillor Stephen Jolly, has continued after beating another rap, let off with a warning over what Jolly says were politically motivated complaints to the local government authority. Victoria's Local Government Inspectorate (LGI) the outfit tasked with law and order in what feels to CBD like an increasingly fractious environment among the state's councils has wrapped up its investigation into a complaint that Jolly unlawfully leaked plans in 2022 for Yarra to privatise its in-home aged care services.

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Care for the aged rewards carers

Daily Telegraph, General News, 26/03/2024, Lee Carissa, Page 29

While the Fair Work Commission's ruling on "work value" and wage increases for aged-care workers is welcome and a milestone in attracting quality staff for a sector under pressure it has also turned the spotlight on value of a different kind. The kind not measured in cash.

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Age-old shift in fees and charges

The Nightly, General News, 25/03/2024, Nick Bruining, Page 24

How the Federal Government's residential care revamp could affect your family. The biggest changes to come out of the final report from the Aged Care Taskforce are those surrounding residential aged care and the amount you'll be asked to chip in.

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Aged care workers have won a huge pay rise. What about the cleaners, cooks and admin staff who support them?

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 25/03/2024, Matthew Xerri, Page 6

This month, the Fair Work Commission handed Australia's aged-care workforce an historic pay rise, with some groups' wages set to increase by more than 28 per cent. [...] It hasn't been long since the Royal Commission into Aged Care found the "unkind and uncaring" system had failed to meet the needs of elderly people, and could even be neglecting them.

Also reported by: Aged Care Insite (Online)

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Aged Care Act: 'Let's get this done'

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 25/03/2024, Christopher Kelly

Advocacy groups continue to call on the federal government to deliver the new Aged Care Act as soon as possible. "Older people have waited too long to have their rights enshrined in legislation," Craig Gear – chief executive officer of the Older Persons Advocacy Network – told Australian Ageing Agenda

Read More

Reablement works, says expert

Australian Ageing Agenda, Other, 25/03/2024, Natasha Egan

All aged care providers should be thinking about how they can embed exercise in their services, an industry event has heard. If all aged care providers offered exercise pathways within their services, older adults would have better health and social outcomes and providers would have fewer staffing needs, according to an aged care executive.

Read More

Radio National, AM, 25/03/2024, Sabra Lane

Report regarding allegations of discrimination against teachers, students, aged care residents and others which are the subject of a damning new report on religious schools and organisations. An investigation by Equality Australia found that 10% of faith-based aged care and social service organisations publicly discriminate against LGBTQ+ people.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Lack of Great Southern residential drug rehabilitation facility raised again by ex-Nationals WA leader

West Australian, Other, 25/03/2024, Stuart McGuckin

Former Nationals WA leader Mia Davies has urged the State Government to fund a residential rehabilitation facility in the Great Southern in the next State Budget. Ms Davies made the comments in State Parliament on Wednesday while supporting Liberal leader Libby Mettam's motion to condemn the State Government for "failing to stem methamphetamine use in WA".

Read More

Hot water bottles and medication-induced gastritis: My battle with endometriosis

Australian Doctor, Other, 25/03/2024, Corinne Glenn

According to Endometriosis Australia, one in seven women, girls and those assigned female at birth will experience endometriosis. I, along with many other doctors, am one of those women.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

What a cancer diagnosis means for work

Canberra Times, General News, 26/03/2024, Zoe Wundenberg, Page 16

On saturday morning, Australians awoke to the news that Catherine, Princess of Wales had been diagnosed with cancer. This really got me thinking about serious illness and work and how the two can be extremely challenging to navigate - even without the global speculation about whether you're even still alive.

Also reported by: <u>Border Mail (Albury-Wodonga)</u>, <u>Bendigo Advertiser (Bendigo)</u>, <u>Ballarat Courier (Ballarat)</u>, <u>Launceston Examiner (Launceston)</u>, <u>Illawarra Mercury (Wollongong)</u>

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Hospital's growing cancer care options

Bendigo Advertiser, General News, 26/03/2024, David Chapman, Page 3

Rewarding private patients for the premiums they pay each year has seen St John of God Bendigo Hospital expand its cancer services. A new medical oncologist, a McGrath Breast Care Nurse Consultant and plans for oncology rehabilitation services are all part of the hospital's growing cancer care options.

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Princess Kate fighting cancer - what can you do to see the warning signs

ABC Online, Other, 25/03/2024, Jules Schiller

When the 42-year-old Princess of Wales announced she had been diagnosed with cancer and is undergoing preventative chemotherapy treatment, the world was shocked. What can you do for your own health? General Manager of Research and Support at the Cancer Council SA, Peter Diamond told Sonya & Jules, "Early detection for many cancer leads to much better outcomes".

Read More

Cancer treatment impact on ovaries and fertility not well understood,

experts call for better data

ABC Online, Other, 25/03/2024, Lauren Roberts

Pamela Gonzalez Arnedo always wanted to be a mother. "I just wasn't sure when exactly, you know, and now [it] is in my mind all the time," she said. The 36-year-old Melbourne woman was diagnosed with an aggressive and fast-growing type of breast cancer in June last year and advised to start treatment straight away.

Read More

Kate Middleton is only 42. Is cancer on the rise in young people?

SBS, Other, 25/03/2024, Ewa Staszewska

Are you too young for cancer? Experts warn the disease does not discriminate. Kate Middleton's cancer diagnosis has led some people to wonder if cancer rates among young people are on the rise.

Read More

'It's a matter of urgency': The push for more chronic fatigue support

SBS, Other, 25/03/2024

Almost a year after a parliamentary committee recommended more funding for ME/CFS support, advocates say the community's suffering is "being compounded on all levels". Emerge Australia has called on the federal government to unlock research and funding for those suffering ME/CFS

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PRIMARY CARE

Di Pilla draws line in the sand

Australian Financial Review, General News, 26/03/2024, James Thomson, Page 40

The battle lines are being drawn around beleaguered hospital operator Healthscope, which is in the early stages of restructuring negotiations with its small army of lenders, and simultaneously appealing to the federal government and the private health

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Healthscope set to hold more talks with landlords

The Australian, Business News, 26/03/2024, Bridget Carter, Page 16

Embattled private hospital operator Healthscope is now believed to be turning its attention to meetings with landlord NorthWest Healthcare on Tuesday after speaking with its other landlords, HealthCo Healthcare and Wellness REIT, last week. NorthWest owns about half the Healthscope real estate portfolio, and receives 2.5 per cent increases in rent annually, but it is expected to take a hard line when it comes to any requests for rent reductions on the 11 or so Healthscope properties it owns.

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Triple zero warning before tragedy

Age, General News, 26/03/2024, Aisha Dow, Page 1

The Victorian government was warned that the state's triple-zero service was being battered with call volumes similar to Melbourne's catastrophic thunderstorm asthma event every day and "with no end in sight" more than a week before the death of a Preston father. The inquest into the death of Nick Panagiotopoulos, 47, who suffered a cardiac arrest in October 2021 after a 16-minute wait for an ambulance operator, has been examining what action was taken as call- Nick and Belinda answering per- Panagiotopoulos formance deteriorated in the preceding weeks.

Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online), Canberra Times (Online).

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Hospital deaths horror

Herald Sun, General News, 26/03/2024, Alex White & Sarah Booth, Page 1

At least seven patients have died in tragedies at a major Victorian hospital since 2022 that could have been avoided, according to whistleblowers. The Herald Sun can reveal the state's health investigator has probed several cases at Latrobe Regional Health - but its findings were kept secret.

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Paramedics protest lack of resources

Ballarat Courier, General News, 26/03/2024, Bryan Hoadley, Page 4

Emergency called "It's pretty disheartening and I think 'have I done everything I can do?" IT'S often about 9am, when most are just starting work, that Sasha Peers will encounter her first serious problem of the day.

Also reported by: Ballarat Courier (Online)

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Dubbo patients satisfied with care: data

Daily Liberal, General News, 26/03/2024, Sarah Falson, Page 2

Dubbo's emergency department (ED) is busier than ever but patients are satisfied with the care they receive. This is according to data from the Emergency Department Patient Survey, put together by the Bureau of Health Information (BHI).

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Ambulance response lags in Bathurst

Western Advocate, General News, 26/03/2024, Sarah Falson, Page 2

Ambulances are taking longer to respond to patient call-outs in Bathurst and the wider region. New data from the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) Healthcare Quarterly report showed response times in Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange were longer from October to December 2023 compared with the previous year.

Also reported by: Bathurst Western Advocate (Online).

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Patients at Flinders Medical Centre forced to sleep in corridors as overcrowding crisis worsens

Adelaide Now, Other, 25/03/2024, Eva Blandis

One of the state's biggest hospitals has set up beds in corridors as it continues to struggle with overcrowding. Bernadette Mulholland from the South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association told 9News beds had been set up in the corridors of the Flinders Medical Centre to cope with the increasing demand.

Read More

GPs head to Canberra for more funding

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 25/03/2024

To make the case for a health system overhaul, general practitioners (GPs) from across the nation are coming to Canberra this week. As part of the delegation supported by Australia's peak doctors'body, the Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP), some 20 GPs will meet with various ministers, senators and members of Parliament.

Read More

Channel 10, 10 News First, 25/03/2024, Jennifer Keyte

Victoria's 000 failings have been laid bare at an inquest into the death of a Preston man. Delays in connecting emergency calls were the worst they'd ever been in October 2021, when the 47-year-old father of three died from a heart attack while waiting for an ambulance.

Play Now

Channel 9, Nine News, 25/03/2024, Kate Collins

From north to south, emergency departments at almost every hospital in the city are battling extreme

overcrowding, with Flinders Medical Centre even setting up beds in the corridors. The doctors union says some patients were left languishing for more than 24 hours.

Play Now

2CC, Breakfast, 25/03/2024, Stephen Cenatiempo

Interview with Dr Nicole Higgins, President, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, regarding GPs from across Australia descending on to Parliament House to make a case for a health system overhaul to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians. Higgins says they want to make sure that Australia has enough GPs for the future and that we increase access to general practice for Canberrans and Australians, but also to make it equitable. She adds Australia has one of the best health systems in the world but the challenge has been making sure it gets funded in the right places.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Kids in social media danger

Courier Mail, General News, 26/03/2024, Clare Armstrong, Page 1

Australian kids shouldn't have smartphones before they are 14 years old due to the serious mental and physical health risks posed by unregulated access to digital company Meta's platforms Instagram and Facebook, a whistleblower has warned. Former Meta product manager Frances Haugen has revealed she is "really concerned about kids" affected by harmful algorithms and bombarded with notifications.

Also reported by: Herald Sun (Melbourne), Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide), Daily Telegraph (Sydney)

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Get police back to their core business

Hobart Mercury, General News, 26/03/2024, Gavin White, Page 17

More and more, as society has changed over the past three decades, so has policing in Tasmania. The tasks highly-trained officers undertake are increasingly moving away from core business.

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Mothballed Bethesda Clinic to re-open in weeks as Government swoops in

West Australian, General News, 26/03/2024, Josh Zimmerman, Page 8

WA's first dedicated eating disorder clinic will open in weeks after the Cook Government signed a three-year lease to operate Bethesda Health Care's recently closed 75-bed Cockburn facility. Bethesda last month said it was "suspending services" at the \$60 million Cockburn site less than a year after it opened because it was "not financially viable" and it was struggling to source psychiatric staff.

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Ward 5A teenagers moved in shake-up

West Australian, General News, 26/03/2024, Josh Zimmerman, Page 9

Older teenagers will be permanently removed from the notorious Ward 5A in a significant re-imagining of mental health services at Perth Children's Hospital triggered by the alleged rape of a 13-year-old patient. In a statement to Parliament on Thursday it was quietly announced 12 of the 20 beds on Ward 5A would be "temporarily" moved to Hollywood Private Hospital, where they will cater specifically for adolescents aged 14 to 16.

Also reported by: West Australian (Online)

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Channel 7, Seven News, 25/03/2024, Susannah Carr and Rick Ardon

A private mental health clinic previously operated by Bethesda that shut down in Perth's south weeks ago will reopen. It will now keep helping veterans and women with eating disorders, but this time as

part of the public health system where mental health beds are in short supply but in high demand.

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6PR, Perth Live, 25/03/2024, Oliver Peterson

A mental health clinic in Cockburn Central, previously operated by Bethesda, will reopen in the coming weeks in the public system. Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson says two floors will be dedicated to female patients with a focus on eating disorders services.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

Midwives keep pushing for EBA

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 26/03/2024, Page 7

Warrnambool midwives and nurses gathered on Thursday March 21 to engage in a statewide discussion regarding a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA). The meeting took place at the Matilda Room at the Warrnambool Racing Club, with the venue dialling into Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) headquarters in Melbourne.

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Parents share heartbreak of pregnancy and baby loss as Say Their Name Day seeks to start conversations

ABC Online, Other, 25/03/2024, Emma Siossian

Liz Schleicher will never forget the day she was told her unborn son, Rigby, had a medical condition that meant he would not be able to survive. At an anatomy scan at 20 weeks, Rigby was diagnosed with a severe lower urinary tract obstruction, a condition described as "not compatible with life".

Read More

Bella's legacy: Newborn heel prick screening extended to include SMA

Ballarat Courier, Other, 25/03/2024, Michelle Smith

If the Newborn Bloodspot Screening Program had tested for Spinal Muscular Atrophy when baby Bella Tuddenham was born, her short life would have been different. Bella died at just 20 days old from the genetic condition - just five days after doctors had finally diagnosed the condition.

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Review of Covid jab rule

Daily Telegraph, General News, 26/03/2024, Page 5

The Covid vaccine mandate for health workers may be scrapped by the NSW government in coming weeks. Consultations are under way between staff, unions, local health districts, NSW Health and chief health officer Kerry Chant.

Also reported by: The Australian (Online), 9News (Online).

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Vax mandates lifted for NSW health workers

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 26/03/2024, Page 9

Health workers in NSW will no longer be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 under a state government plan to phase out vaccine mandates in coming weeks. NSW Health Minister Ryan Park

said yesterday the government would speak to the workforce about removing the mandates enforced during the vaccine rollout in August 2021.

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Regional housing crisis hits health services

Ballarat Courier, General News, 26/03/2024, Ben Silvester, Page 7

Local healthcare services have been hit harder than any other sector by the housing crisis gripping Australia's regional cities, a study has shown. It is the latest evidence of a shortfall one leading economist called "a long-running constraint on national economic growth".

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Vaccine mandate to be dropped

Daily Liberal, General News, 26/03/2024, Maeve Bannister, Page 2

Vaccine mandates for NSW health workers could soon be dropped as the state government weighs up lifting the COVID-19 pandemic-era requirements. Health Minister Ryan Park confirmed the change would be considered after consulting with the state's health workforce.

Also reported by: <u>Western Advocate (Bathurst)</u>, <u>Bathurst Western Advocate (Online)</u>, <u>Canberra Times (Online)</u>, <u>Daily Mail Australia (Online)</u>, <u>Warrnambool Standard (Online)</u>, <u>Illawarra Mercury (Online)</u>, <u>Canberra Times</u> (<u>Online)</u>, <u>Yahoo! News Australia (Online)</u>,

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Hospital staffing woes in spotlight

Daily Advertiser, General News, 26/03/2024, Andrew Mangelsdorf, Page 5

The challenges faced by staff at Wagga Base and worker attrition rates have been raised as the hospital's top bureaucrat appeared before a government healthcare funding inquiry. Wagga Base Hospital general manager Len Bruce recounted several staffing challenges and the increased pressure brought on due to a lack of qualified specialists in the city as he testified before the Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding last Thursday.

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Incentive payments lure scores of GPs to the bush

The Australian, Other, 25/03/2024, Natasha Robinson

There are early signs of an uplift in medical registrars signing up to be GPs, as doctors lobby the federal government to widely roll out incentives for young medics to take up training places. Incentivised training places for areas of workforce shortage resulted in an extra 114 GP placements being taken by young doctors in the past year, new figures show, with many of those communities having struggled without a GP registrar for years.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

The rise of tapentadol

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 25/03/2024, Megan Haggan

A new UNSW Sydney big health data study, published in the Medical Journal of Australia, has shown that the 2020 tightening of PBS restrictions on opioid supply led to a drop in PBS subsidised opioid

Similar coverage reported by: Pharmacy Daily (Online).

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CAPS 'not going anywhere'

Australian Journal of Pharmacy, Other, 25/03/2024

Pharmacies could still be left out of pocket as a result of 60-day dispensing, despite promises of fresh funding for the sector under the Eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement (8CPA).

Qld ownership bill passed

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 25/03/2024

In a win for community pharmacy, the Queensland's Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill was successfully passed by the state's Parliament on Friday. President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland branch, emphasised the collaborative efforts of the Queensland Government, Opposition, crossbench, and Guild members in achieving this significant milestone.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

No relevant coverage

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Dentist facing ban over failed drug tests, cocaine charges

The Australian, General News, 26/03/2024, James Dowling, Page 7

Sydney cosmetic dentist James Hanna has been found to have breached his industry code of conduct for regularly missing and failing random drug tests after two cocaine possession charges. [...] Dr Hanna did not notify the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency or Dental Council of either charge, breaching the law.

Also reported by: The Australian (Online)

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Vaping debate: doctor's reticence over tobacco money raises questions over conflict of interest

The Guardian, Other, 26/03/2024, Melissa Davey & Natasha May

A GP opposed to the government's vaping reforms and whose nicotine prescription website is being assessed by the drugs regulator has given school vaping education sessions and spoken at a student conference without declaring she has received financial support from a tobacco company. Dr Carolyn Beaumont owns the vaping telehealth service medicalnicotine.com.au, which allows people to obtain a prescription for nicotine vapes in minutes, without speaking directly to a doctor or pharmacist.

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'Heavy punishment': Lawyer says lengthy court delay has effectively ended Dr Jereth Kok's career

Australian Doctor, Other, 25/03/2024, Heather Saxena

Dr Kok is accused of making 'denigrating, demeaning' comments against doctors in a series of social media posts. The five years of delays in setting a court date for Dr Jereth Kok, the GP accused of calling for genocide of racial and religious groups, has effectively ended his medical career, his lawyer says.

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Helping patients understand new vaping restrictions

Australian Pharmacist, Other, 25/03/2024, Peter Guthney & Chloe Hava

With additional vaping restrictions rolling out throughout 2024, pharmacists are more likely to encounter patients seeking therapeutic vaping products. Many of these patients will be surprised by the restrictions.

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AMA pushes bill

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 25/03/2024

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has lauded the introduction of draft laws into Parliament last week aimed at combatting the "perilous and escalating trend of vaping" while safeguarding younger generations. AMA President Prof Steve Robson has called on all MPs to throw their weight behind the legislation, which encompasses a ban on the domestic manufacture, supply, advertising, and commercial possession of non-therapeutic vape products.

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Channel 7, The Latest: Seven News, 25/03/2024, Jerrie Demasi

Australia's Border Force teams are cracking down on the supply of illegal vapes. Smuggling operations are increasing in numbers and sophistication.

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Radio National, Breakfast, 25/03/2024, Sally Sara/ Patricia Karvelas

Queensland health authorities have seized almost 150,000 vapes and 15 million cigarettes during a major crackdown on illegal tobacco products. Around 500 businesses have been fined for doing the wrong thing, including selling fairy floss and ice cream-flavoured vapes, some of which contain high levels of nicotine and other toxic chemicals.

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SPORT

Sister's heartbreak: star's last days a 'war zone inside his head'

The Australian, Sport, 26/03/2024, Jessica Halloran, Page 28

Renee Tuck, the sister of AFL footballer Shane, last year told a harrowing story of how her much-loved brother battled "a war zone inside his head" during his final "horrific" days. At the coronial inquest into his suicide, at just 38, Renee explained how her brother, who played 173 games for Richmond, contended constantly with "voices inside his head" and was in immense distress.

Similar coverage reported by: The Guardian (Online)

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AFL in no rush over safety initiatives

The Australian, Sport, 26/03/2024, Wendy Carlisle, Page 28

The AFL will not be rolling out urgent safety initiatives recommended by the Victoria state coroner after the inquest into former Richmond star Shane Tuck, who died aged 38 by suicide in July 2020. Tuck was diagnosed at post mortem with severe CTE, an early-onset dementia caused by repeated brain injuries that caused no symptoms.

Also reported by: <u>The Mercury (Online)</u>, <u>Northern Territory News (Online)</u>, <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>, <u>Herald Sun</u> (<u>Melbourne</u>), <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Online</u>)

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Miles shrugs off legacy concerns

Courier Mail, General News, 26/03/2024, Hayden Johnson, Page 2

Steven Miles has dismissed mounting concerns Queensland will be left without a major Olympic Games legacy and revealed new details about his phone call to John Coates days before rejecting a new stadium at Victoria Park. The Premier on Monday defended the growing questions over his

decision to ignore Graham Quirk's infrastructure review and instead spend \$1.6bn upgrading the Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre next to a significant koala habitat.

Similar coverage reported by: ABC Online (Online)

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Former events boss is scathing

Courier Mail, General News, 26/03/2024, Greg Stolz, Page 2

A former Queensland events supremo has slammed the Brisbane Olympics venue "debacle" and accused the Miles government of lacking vision. Michael Denton, a long-serving former chief executive of the Queensland Events Corporation now known as Tourism and Events Queensland has taken to social media to vent his anger over the government's key Olympics decision.

Also reported by: Toowoomba Chronicle (Toowoomba)

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Chasing answers to rare genetic conditions

Age, General News, 26/03/2024, Angus Thomson, Page 13

Watching videos of their daughter's birthday, David and Nadine Lipworth can't recognise the girl sitting on her father's lap, singing Happy Birthday as she blows out four candles. Just months later, the mysterious genetic condition that had hampered Sasha's development began whittling away at the small progress she had made since birth.

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Alarm at unknown cancer sources

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 26/03/2024, Henrietta Cook, Page 5

Khannah Grace's cancer diagnosis opened up more questions than it answered. After seeking medical help for unexplained back pain in 2018, doctors told the then 31-year-old that she had cancer, but they did not know what type.

Also reported by: Sydney Morning Herald (Online), Age (Melbourne)

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Study sheds light on psoriasis

Canberra Times, General News, 26/03/2024, Lucy Bladen, Page 7

Researchers from the Australian National University have discovered what causes psoriasis, a skin disease causing red, dry or itchy skin. The team of scientists have found a gene mutation causes the condition and if there are two copies of the mutated gene a person can develop psoriatic arthritis.

Similar coverage reported by: West Australian (Online)

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Reason for scaly skin

Courier Mail, General News, 26/03/2024, Page 17

The Australian National University scientists have discovered a gene mutation is responsible for causing psoriasis - a chronic inflammatory skin disease that causes patients to develop red, scaly and itchy patches across their body. According to ANU researcher Chelisa Cardinez, if two copies of this mutated gene (known as IKBKB) are present, patients with psoriasis may go on to develop psoriatic arthritis, leaving them with joint pain, stiffness and swelling.

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Psoriasis gene discovery

Geelong Advertiser, General News, 26/03/2024, Page 4

Scientists from The Australian National University have discovered a gene mutation is responsible for causing psoriasis - a chronic inflammatory skin disease that causes patients to develop red, scaly and itchy patches across their body. According to ANU researcher Chelisa Cardinez, if two copies of this mutated gene (known as IKBKB) are present, patients with psoriasis may go on to develop psoriatic arthritis, leaving them with joint pain, stiffness and swelling.

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Proteomics teams with Oxford university for endometriosis study

West Australian, Other, 25/03/2024, Michael Philipps

ASX-listed Proteomics has joined forces with England's revered Oxford University as the medtech continues to study its blood test for the diagnosis of endometriosis. The company's prototype "PromarkerEndo" blood test has previously correctly identified up to 90 per cent of patients with endometriosis from a study of more than 900 patients.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Acute fever shame

Northern Territory News, General News, 26/03/2024, Alex Treacy, Page 1

The Northern Territory saw more diagnoses in 2022 of acute rheumatic fever, the precursor to lifethreatening rheumatic heart disease, among First Nations people than all other states and territories combined, shameful new figures show. Acute rheumatic fever, caused by untreated streptococcus bacterial infections, typically those of the throat or skin, such as scabies or impetigo, has a high rate of recurrence, leading to its more serious evolution into rheumatic heart disease.

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Health report delayed

Cairns Post, General News, 26/03/2024, Samuel Davis, Page 3

A major report into healthcare in Cape York and the Torres Strait that was prompted by criticism from community leaders and a toddler's death has been delayed, investigators have announced. Led by Professor Cindy Shannon AM, the investigation, launched last August, is reviewing the administration, management and treatment of First Nations peoples across the region by Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service.

Also reported by: <u>Cairns Post (Online)</u>, <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>, <u>Townsville Bulletin (Online)</u>, <u>Toowoomba</u> <u>Chronicle (Online)</u>, <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Online)</u>

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OFFICE OF HEALTH PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

School asbestos scare

Courier Mail, General News, 26/03/2024, Taylah Fellows, Page 1

Hundreds of young students could have been exposed to asbestos at a large Brisbane school after dust from contaminated ceiling tiles was found in 12 classrooms. The potentially deadly substance was found in perforated ceiling tiles in blocks D and E at Rochedale State School, which houses students in years 1-3.

Also reported by: <u>Daily Telegraph Australia (Online)</u>, <u>Northern Territory News (Online)</u>, <u>The Mercury (Online)</u>, <u>Gold Coast Bulletin (Online)</u>, <u>Adelaide Now (Online)</u>, <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>

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6000 cases this year: Free jabs as dangerous virus grips state

Toowoomba Chronicle, General News, 26/03/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 4

Queensland babies will be offered free vaccinations against potentially deadly Respiratory Syncytial Virus in a \$31m investment by the state government. The virus, which is the most common cause of hospitalisations in infants and young children, has taken grip of the state.

Similar coverage reported by: <u>The Australian (Online)</u>, <u>ABC Online (Online)</u>, <u>Royal Australian College of General</u> <u>Practitioners (Online)</u>

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Penny Wong announces \$17m funding injection to treat TB scourge in the Asia-Pacific

Adelaide Now, Other, 25/03/2024, Duncan Evans

It's a fatal disease that kills someone every 20 seconds and most of it is in our backyard, crippling our neighbours from PNG to Vietnam. Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong will direct \$17m to fight TB in the Asia-Pacific.

Read More

Cold and flu season forecast to whack Australia hard

The Australian, Other, 26/03/2024, Madeleine Achenza & Blair Jackson

The forthcoming flu season is forecast to be just as bad or worse than 2023, with one-in-three people tipped to get a cold or influenza. Flu cases are already double the weekly rate of last year's sickly season, but one epidemiologist says it's unclear whether cases are peaking early or climbing to record levels.

Also reported by: <u>The Mercury (Online)</u>, <u>Northern Territory News (Online)</u>, <u>Adelaide Now (Online)</u>, <u>Daily</u> <u>Telegraph Australia (Online)</u>, <u>NEWS.com.au (Online)</u>, <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>, <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Online)</u>, <u>Townsville Bulletin (Online)</u>

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Pandemic accord talks at loggerheads as time ticks away

The Australian, Other, 25/03/2024

The final round of talks on a landmark pandemic accord faces a frantic last push this week, with countries still pulling in different directions on how to handle future global health crises. The last week of negotiations runs until Thursday with nations trying to hammer out an agreement to make sure the world is better prepared to deal with the next pandemic -- or better still, stamp it out before it even happens.

Also reported by: <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Online)</u>, <u>NEWS.com.au (Online)</u>, <u>Northern Territory News (Online)</u>, <u>Geelong Advertiser (Online)</u>

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Australia to help Pacific neighbours fight tuberculosis

National Indigenous Times, Other, 25/03/2024, Kat Wong

Australia will help its Asian and Pacific neighbours fight tuberculosis to stop its spread and support peace and stability in the region. Roughly every 20 seconds, someone dies from tuberculosis, making it one of the deadliest diseases in the world.

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All smiles for jabs for jellybeans drive

Pharmacy Daily, Other, 25/03/2024

In a bid to promote flu vaccinations in community pharmacies, the Pharmacy Guild's NSW Branch provided complimentary vaccines last week to all state parliamentarians, setting up a clinic within the NSW Parliament House. A total of 137 vaccinations were administered, with participants receiving packets of Glucojel jellybeans as a token of appreciation.

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TB funding vital

As a 'Progress Snapshot' is unveiled at a parliamentary breakfast today to mark World Tuberculosis Day (March 24), there is renewed hope the deadly disease can be eliminated in the region with increased funding, according to Results International (Australia). With progress getting back on track from COVID-19 setbacks, the snapshot analysis by Results International (Australia) reveals deaths have declined across several countries in Asia and the Pacific between 2021 and 2022.

Read More

Channel 10, 10 News First, 25/03/2024, Jennifer Keyte

Retail Pharmacy, Other, 25/03/2024

A new testing clinic will infect and contain dozens of volunteers with a range of diseases to improve Australia's preparedness for the next pandemic. The first unit of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere was launched by the Doherty Institute today.

Play Now

ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 25/03/2024, Craig Zonca and Loretta Ryan

The Qld Government is set to announce free RSV vaccines for babies. The potentially deadly virus is regarded as the most common cause of hospitalisations in infants and young children. Earlier this month, the WA Government became the first to announce free vaccinations against RSV with the Australian Medical Association Queensland President Dr Maria Bolton, then urging the Qld Government to follow suit.

<u>Play Now</u>

ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 25/03/2024, Craig Zonca and Loretta Ryan

Interview with Chris Owen, Qld Pharmacy Guild of Australia, on the free RSV immunisation program being rolled out for Queensland infants and young children. Owen says there is a strain on supply issues across the board for people over 65. He adds for the older age group, it's certainly not a free-flowing supply, but they are getting supplies in and it's just a matter of shopping around to be able to find some.

Play Now

ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 25/03/2024, Craig Zonca and Loretta Ryan

Queensland parents will soon be offered free vaccinations for newborns against the potentially deadly respiratory virus, RSV. The Qld Government has announced a \$31m, 12-month immunisation program that will come into effect from May. More than 70,000 infants and young children will be eligible.

<u>Play Now</u>

ABC Radio Brisbane, Breakfast, 25/03/2024, Craig Zonca and Loretta Ryan

Interview with Dr Paul Griffin, Infectious Diseases Expert, Mater Hospital, regarding the Qld Government announcing a free RSV immunisation program for infants and young children. Griffin says RSV is a terrible virus, particularly for young children as well as the elderly. He adds they are lucky that they now have tools to combat it in both and the funding was the issue. He adds it's great to see the government putting that money towards investing in our children's health.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

RSV vaccine Beyfortus (nirsevimab) recently approved by TGA to be

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More states roll out free infant RSV immunisation

Australian Doctor, Other, 25/03/2024, Kemal Atlay

Newborns in Queensland and NSW will be eligible for a free dose of nirsevimab, the newly registered respiratory syncytial virus prophylaxis, under new immunisation programs this winter. [...] The TGA approved nirsevimab as a single IM injection for under-2s last November.

Newborn babies in Queensland can get a free new vaccine for a respiratory virus that is the most common reason for hospitalisation of younger children in Australia. [...] The vaccine nirsevimab, sold under the name Beyfortus, was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in November.

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Can medicine repurposing help GPs?

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Other, 25/03/2024

Quality care experts say GPs should consider a new TGA program looking to expand prescribing criteria and medicine access, but there are caveats. The Medicines Repurposing Program has been established to expand treatment options in Australia.

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NSW infants are now eligable for free RSV vaccine

Toowoomba Chronicle, Other, 25/03/2024, Aisling Brennan

Nearly 9000 babies who are most at risk from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) will be eligible for the new vaccination rollout across New South Wales. [...] Nirsevimab (also known as Beyfortus) was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in November last year.

Also reported by: <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>, <u>Gold Coast Bulletin (Online)</u>, <u>Geelong Advertiser (Online)</u>, <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Online)</u>

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

Cann spill

Sunraysia Daily, General News, 25/03/2024, Wade Stephens, Page 1

Cann Group chief executive Peter Koetsier has stepped down as the medicinal cannabis production company forges ahead with plans to reduce its massive debts. After serving 14 months in the role, Mr Koetsier cited family reasons for resigning, and will work through a handover period to finish up at the end of the financial year.

Also reported by: Gold Coast Bulletin (Online)

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FOOD STANDARDS

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand recalls Bibigo dumplings and Cau Tre spring rolls

The Australian, Other, 25/03/2024, Aisling Brennan

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand has recalled Bibigo dumplings and Cau Tre spring rolls manufactured by CJ Nutracon Pty Ltd. Consumers who recently bought dumplings and spring rolls sold

made available to babies in QLD, NSW

7news.com.au, Other, 25/03/2024, Warren Barnsley

at Asian grocery stores in multiple states are being urged to check whether they've been recalled over allergy concerns.

Also reported by: <u>Cairns Post (Online)</u>, <u>Cairns Post (Online)</u>, <u>NEWS.com.au (Online)</u>, <u>Geelong Advertiser</u> (<u>Online</u>), <u>Gold Coast Bulletin (Online</u>), <u>Northern Territory News (Online</u>), <u>Daily Telegraph Australia (Online</u>), <u>Toowoomba Chronicle (Online)</u>, <u>The Courier Mail (Online)</u>, <u>West Australian (Online</u>), <u>Townsville Bulletin (Online</u>)

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Urgent recall issued for popular Asian food sold across Australia

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 25/03/2024

Consumers who recently bought dumplings and spring rolls sold at Asian grocery stores in multiple states are being urged to check whether they've been recalled over allergy concerns. Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) has recalled some of the Bibigo dumplings and Cau Tre spring rolls manufactured by CJ Nutracon Pty Ltd due to the presence of an undeclared allergen.

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Recall issued for popular dumplings and spring rolls

The New Daily, Other, 25/03/2024

Shoppers who recently bought dumplings and spring rolls from Asian grocery stores have been urged to check their purchases amid a urgent recall. Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) has issued recall for some Bibigo dumplings and Cau Tre spring rolls manufactured by CJ Nutracon Pty Ltd due to the presence of an undeclared allergen.

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