

Primary at 30%

PRIMARY Health Care this morning announced it holds interests in 29.727% of takeover target Symbion Health.

If Primary reaches 50.1% by the close of business today it will declare its offer unconditional, and accelerate payment terms to ten business days, meaning those who accept will receive their cash in time for Christmas.

Healthscope today reaffirmed its interest in pursuing a deal with Symbion, saying it's considering yet another takeover bid for the company, as well as being interested in discussing the matter with Primary.

Diet pill discounts

THE debut in the Australian market of Goldshield's LIPOBind OTC weight loss product is said to be behind a 30% price cut in Abbott's Reductil this month.

LIPOBind (PD 26 Sep) is being distributed through Terry White and Chemmart pharmacies across the country, with Goldshield Healthcare claiming a number of studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the product's primary ingredient NeOpuntia.

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Payments for preceptors?

THE Australian Pharmacy Council is looking at the possibility of making payments to preceptors as part of concerns about "significant problems" in the accreditation of overseas trained pharmacists.

A statement issued this morning said overseas pharmacists are being warned they may experience difficulties in obtaining suitable supervised practice placements, particularly in major metropolitan areas.

In NSW alone there are 112 people close to completing their pre-registration period of supervised practice, with fee paying students and offshore university partnership also putting "strain on experiential learning and pre-registration training placements".

Other problems cited in responding to a shortage of pharmacists identified a decade ago include difficulty in recruiting

Rhinosinusitis call

ATTENDEES at the World Allergy Congress in Bangkok last week were presented with new European guidelines for the treatment of acute and chronic rhinosinusitis and nasal polyps.

The updated recommendations should be adopted in Australia, according to Professor Peter Wormald, who's Chairman of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery at Adelaide and Flinders Universities.

The new guidelines support a new management system to properly diagnose patients, including the recommendation that in the majority of patients appropriate medical treatment is as effective as surgery.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

BURGER King in the USA is being sued by a man who bit off a bit more than he could chew.

24-year-old Miquell Hartless of Vermont claims he found an unwrapped condom in his burger, describing it as "a very sour, bitter sort of taste".

He's seeking damages for emotional duress and pain and suffering as well as medical expenses incurred because he was so worried about whether the condom had been used.

FUEL shortages in China could lead to a looming health crisis, after a crematorium reportedly started dumping half-burnt corpses to save on diesel costs.

The *South China Morning Post* reported villagers in Hengyang county, Hunan discovered the practice after an "unbearable stench" started to emanate from a ditch.

"As the price of diesel rose, we saw more and more bags thrown out of the crematorium," one witness said.

THERE'S no anti-venom yet for a new species of giant spitting cobra discovered in Kenya.

Conservation group Wildlife Direct said the species had been identified as unique and urged the global community to protect the reptiles.

They could have a tough time convincing people to love the snakes, which can grow as long as nine feet and contain enough venom to kill 15 people.

"People don't care about saving snakes. They talk of saving dolphins or cats, but never snakes!" said the manager of a Kenyan snake farm.

academic pharmacists for the 16 pharmacy schools, a lack in some places of facilities and funding for research, and "significant cost of time and effort on the part of the preceptor," which flows onto a reduced capacity for the profession to provide quality pre-registration training for graduates.

From 01 Jan 08 APC applicants must also achieve a higher proficiency in the International English Language Testing System, scoring at least 6.5 in each of the four components of the test.

Health reform

HEALTH ministers from around the country have agreed on the need for "urgent reform of the Australian health system".

They said their meeting with new health minister Nicola Roxon in Hobart last week (PD Fri) was the "first step towards ending the blame game" that has characterised the sector over the last decade.

The first target is elective surgery, with a top priority also being the renegotiation of the Australian Health Care Agreement which expires on 30 Jun 08.

Pharmacy e-Bulletin

THIS week's issue of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy e-Bulletin covers the use of probiotics for the prevention of antibiotic-associated diarrhoea.

The findings from a recent meta-analysis indicated that some supplements containing living micro-organisms significantly reduce the development of diarrhoea associated with antibiotics.

The bulletin is available from chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au.

Stop snoring ruining your life

It's long been considered a joke in the bedroom but snoring can have serious consequences if left unchecked, affecting bedroom intimacy, work performance and general wellbeing. Snoring deprives sufferers of the sleep that experts say is vital to our physical and mental health, and essential for the normal functioning of all the systems of our body.

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