

HIP flagship store

HEALTH Information Pharmacy has announced plans for a new Melbourne CBD "benchmark" site which will become the flagship for the company's Vic growth.

Yesterday the firm's parent Health Corporation provided a Jan update to investors, saying it's been "aggressive in re-modelling the support structure for its 33 member pharmacies during the last quarter of 2007."

Chairman Graham Dunkley said the company had also welcomed three new retail pharmacy members in greater Melbourne - two in Lilydale and one at Werribee.

The CBD site is expected to launch later this month, with Dunkley saying the move was "an indicator of a continued push for growth and expansion in all eastern states."

The statement didn't address the shock resignation last month of the company's business development director and board member Brian Keen (PD 12 Dec).



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1. "A brief review of the use of honey as a clinical dressing", Molan, P.C., Primary Intention (The Australian Journal of Wound Management), 6: 61-140-158 (1998).

2. White, R., Cooper, R., and Molan, P. (2005). Honey: A modern wound management product. Wounds UK Limited, Aberdeen, United Kingdom.

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First Guild R&D project

SYDNEY University's Professor Charlie Benrimoj has been awarded the first research and development grant under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

The Pharmacy Guild is managing the R&D program under the guidance of the Professional Programs and Services Advisory Committee (PPSAC), with funding of up to \$19m allocated to projects which must be finalised by 30 Jun 2010.

Benrimoj is Professor of Pharmacy Practice at Sydney Uni, and was recently recognised as an FIP Fellow at the 67th World Congress of the international Pharmaceutical Congress in Beijing (PD 03 Sep).

The R&D project is dubbed "Building Organisational Flexibility to Promote the Implementation of Primary Care Services in Community Pharmacy," and will aim to boost the skill development and capacity of pharmacists and their staff as they integrate primary care services into their practices.

Current flexibility in pharmacy will be examined, and then tools will be developed to help pharmacy staff "utilise their skill base and structure."

The outcome will include an intervention program to help develop skills, with the tools to be tested and refined through testing with thirty pharmacy practitioners.

Packaging update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration is seeking feedback from the industry about a proposed update to requirements for the child-resistant packaging of medicines.

The move follows work undertaken by an expert advisory committee in 2006, which produced a draft order for implementation by the proposed but now defunct Australia New Zealand Therapeutic Products Authority.

The TGA said there is still "strong justification" for updating child-resistant packaging requirements and has produced a new draft order, which should be reviewed by stakeholders and any comments submitted by 22 Feb.

Another .04%

PRIMARY Health Care this morning announced that it now holds 36.07% of takeover target Symbion, up from 36.03% yesterday.

UK prevention push

BRITISH Prime Minister Gordon Brown has announced the introduction of free screening for stroke, diabetes, heart and kidney disease as part of a major push towards preventative medicine.

He said that renewal of the UK National Health Service is the government's "highest priority," signalling the increased availability of procedures such as electrocardiograms, blood tests and ultrasound in GP surgeries rather than hospitals.

"Over time, everyone in Britain will have access to the right preventative health check-up," Brown said.

The new services will be introduced over the next 3 years.

Zolpidem reminder

PHARMACISTS are being reminded to only dispense more than a single pack at a time of products containing zolpidem.

Revised TGA requirements mean that from 31 Dec new packs can only contain a maximum of 14 tablets, and the updated Consumer Medicine Information in the new products will now include descriptions of the widely reported possible unusual adverse effects.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

A BURGLAR in New Zealand whose ear was bitten off by a police dog will receive a new one courtesy of Kiwi taxpayers.

The New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation has agreed to pay for a complex series of operations to create a new ear for 29-year-old Casey Voges, who's currently awaiting trial on ten burglary charges.

Police say Voges resisted arrest in 2005 and the dog attacked instinctively.

"I'm a victim as well and here victims are compensated," Voges said.

A MAJOR bedroom crisis has been averted in Europe, where French customs officials have seized more than 200,000 fake anti-impotence pills.

A freight shipment from India was intercepted at Paris' Roissy airport by sharp-eyed officers.

"Branded Powergra and Erectalis, each box contained, in fact, four tablets in the characteristic shape and colour of Viagra or Cialis pills," said a government spokesman.

"The companies Pfizer and Eli Lilly...quickly confirmed the counterfeit nature of these products and the 224,000 pills were seized," he added.

NEXT time a customer complains about stomach pain, maybe they need more than Mylanta.

A Croatian soldier who suffered 16 years of stabbing pains in the gut has finally had a four-inch needle removed from his stomach.

Despite repeatedly visiting doctors to complain about the problem, Toma Zupan was unable to find relief until a recent X-ray revealed the foreign object.

It's understood the needle was left behind accidentally by army doctors who operated on the former soldier on the Balkan battlefields in 1991.

"Normally I would have blamed the doctors for the mistake they made back then, but at that time they saved my life when they operated on me - so I'll not be taking the matter further," the 73-year-old said.

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