

## Diabetes price rises

THE registrant contribution for supplies under the National Diabetes Services Scheme has increased this month under annual indexation arrangements.

From 01 Jan prices on a range of products made available under the scheme increased slightly, including urine test strips, tape tablets, needles, syringes and insulin pump consumables.

Registrant contributions are currently covered by State and Territory governments.

More information available at [www.diabetesaustralia.com.au](http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au).

## NAPSA congress

THE Sydney University Pharmacy Association is hosting this year's National Australian Pharmacy Student's Association congress, which will take place 23-29 Jan 08.

All delegates are reminded that today is the last day to advise flight details to organisers for airport transfer pick-ups.

See [www.napsacongress.org.au](http://www.napsacongress.org.au).

## Hope Awards 07/08

ORGANISERS of the Hope Awards are calling for entries in the comp which closes on 28 Mar 08.

The initiative challenges both professional and amateur filmmakers to create short films with a clear message of hope for people with mental illness, and their families and carers.

The winning films will be part of a DVD for distribution as an educational resource, with more than \$22,000 in prize money available to winners.

The initiative a collaboration of Eli Lilly Australia and the Mental Health Council of Australia.

See [www.hopeawards.com.au](http://www.hopeawards.com.au).

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## ASMI disputes MJA articles

THE Australian Self Medication Industry said yesterday that a News Limited report claiming misuse of Nurofen Plus should be "carefully assessed before appropriate action can be considered."

An article in the *Medical Journal of Australia* reported on two cases of perforated ulcers in which patients were grossly misusing the pain reliever (*PD* yesterday), taking up to 72 tablets a day.

ASMI scientific director Deon Schoombie said OTC analgesics combined with codeine "have a long history of safe use when used according to instructions and many thousands of Australians have benefited from them".

The industry group agreed that pharmacists need to maintain a high degree of awareness about people buying large quantities of the medication.

"Any medicine can cause problems when used incorrectly," a statement said.

Guild President Kos Sclavos said any change to make Nurofen Plus a prescription-only medication would affect legitimate patients.

"We work closely with the police and health groups to

monitor medication misuse and there has not been a spike in the number of people abusing Nurofen Plus lately, nor have we had any complaints about any pharmacists doing the wrong thing," Sclavos said.

MEANWHILE, another MJA report which called for tighter regulation of complementary medicines has also been criticised by ASMI.

The article compared the major differences between the regulation of complementary weight loss products with those available as registered pharmaceuticals, claiming the regulatory framework for complementary products in Australia is "fundamentally flawed."

ASMI disagreed, saying he current listing system is appropriate and urging "better enforcement" of existing arrangements - particularly in relation to weight loss products.

However PSA president Brian Grogan has supported the MJA conclusions, saying complementary products should be assessed for efficacy and delisted if their claims can't be proven.

## Barclays buys SYB

BARCLAYS Group this week increased its stake in Symbion Health to 6.49%.

The long-running takeover saga for Symbion continues, with suitor Primary Health Care this morning advising it now holds 36.05% of the company, up 0.02%.

## Market risk report

AVERAGE pharmacy prices are expected to increase this year, according to a report issued by pharmacy valuation specialist Medici Capital.

The 2008 Pharmacy Market Risk report forecasts that in particular pharmacies in Brisbane and Victorian metropolitan areas will attract higher prices.

Medici md Frank Sirianni said the report is aimed at the banking industry and analysts, saying "We believe that more informed bankers will lead to more appropriate and considered lending decisions for the pharmacy industry as a whole."

## UK PE move

AUTHORITIES in Britain have announced that new measures to limit pack sizes of medications containing pseudoephedrine will become law on 01 Apr 08.

From that date the sale and supply of products containing over 720mg of pseudoephedrine or 180mg of ephedrine is subject to a prescription.

The move aims to combat their diversion to make illicit drugs.

## Vic MMR workshop

THE Victorian branch of the Pharmaceutical Society will next month hold a two-day stage 1 Medication Management Review Accreditation Workshop.

The program, which will take place 28-29 Feb at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, is recognised by the AACP and allows participants to progress to stage 2 assessment and accreditation.

It costs \$560 for PSA members and \$842 for non-members; more info 03 9389 4013.

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

A TRADITIONAL remedy?

A Romanian man has ended up in hospital with food poisoning after finding a dead mouse inside his bottle of beer.

32-year-old Mihai Stanescu was looking forward to a cleansing ale at a bar in the town of Bacau but said when he opened the bottle and took a few gulps "the taste was very strange."

SURGEONS in China have successfully removed a 45kg tumour from a woman's buttocks.

The tumour weighed more than the 36-year-old patient, with two teams of surgeons in Guangzhou working for more than 8 hours to remove the 1.5m-long growth.

The patient is suffering from multiple neurofibromatosis and said the tumour had been growing for the last 14 years.

THIS guy really should have asked his pharmacist.

A 57-year-old man from California in the USA is now known as 'Papa Smurf' after permanently turning his skin blue by self-administering a treatment of colloidal silver.

Paul Karason said he suffered from stress-related dermatitis and tried the remedy which was widely prescribed before the advent of penicillin.

Long-term use of silver can cause Karason's condition which is known as argyria.

Although the treatment didn't help with the dermatitis, he said the colloidal silver had cured his sinus troubles and arthritis symptoms.



Paul Karason - no longer feeling blue, just looking it.