

Doctors' dinners

MEDICINES Australia has hired a consulting firm to check that pharmaceutical companies have complied with the industry's Code of Conduct when hosting "educational events" for doctors.

Auditors from Deloitte will review all educational events, incl meals and other hospitality, conducted by pharmaceutical companies for doctors over the period 01 Jul-31 Dec 07.

This appointment goes beyond an ACCC requirement that member companies report the details of their educational events for publication on the Medicines Australia website.

"The appointment of an independent auditor recognises concerns held by some in the community that there is a lack of transparency in the interactions between pharmaceutical companies and doctors, said MA ceo Ian Chalmers.

"We have listened to those concerns and we're taking action," he said, adding that "significant sanctions" would apply to companies which breach the MA Code of Conduct.

"I hope people will recognise that these events are important in educating doctors about new medicines and the quality use of medicines," he said.

Deloitte will report to Medicines Australia in February.

Customers in swim

MORE than 100 pharmacy customers have won the opportunity to send their children to swimming lessons with former Olympian Kieren Perkins.

Hamilton Laboratories last year ran a promotion to give 120 young Australians a spot in the Hamilton Kieren Perkins Swim Clinic, which will be held in six locations around the country in February.

Entrants were required to purchase Hamilton products from a participating pharmacy.

Winners were published on Sat.

Symbion PharmX pact

SYMBION Health has announced that it's reached agreement with PharmX to use the company's ordering gateway for both its Pharmacy and Consumer divisions.

The deal also involves the integration of PharmX with Symbion's Minfo pharmacy solution software.

The PharmX system, a joint venture owned by Corum, Mountaintop Systems, Simple Retail and PCA NU is already used by API and DHL.

Since it commenced business in 2006 PharmX has transmitted

more than 2 million orders and invoices via the gateway.

PharmX chairman Graham Cunningham said "We are extremely pleased to have reached agreement with Symbion Health."

MEANWHILE, Symbion Health suitor Primary Health Care this morning confirmed that it now holds 38.62% of the company, in its bid which now closes 07 Feb.

Primary has changed its advertising for the bid, today showing a blister pack of tablets and telling shareholders "don't run the risk of a financial headache."

Bedwetting site

A NEW website which provides information about bedwetting has been launched by Ferring Pharmaceuticals.

The company said it's launched the initiative because many parents don't know where to turn in seeking treatment.

The site covers common myths about nocturnal enuresis and urges anyone concerned about the issue to see a doctor.

It can be viewed at www.treatbedwetting.info.

PHA to rate govts

GOVERNMENTS will have their performance in public health scrutinised by the Public Health Association of Australia (PHA).

In his first announcement as ceo of the PHA, Michael Moore said that the time had come for governments to take a long-term approach to health and move beyond the debate on public hospital waiting lists.

Mr Moore, a former ACT Health Minister, who took up his new appointment last week, said the PHA would establish a set of criteria to identify best practice.

"We will then make an assessment against their own reporting in Health Departments' Annual Reports to identify how they rate in public health."

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A PATIENT in the US has undergone surgery to correct a rare condition in which music caused epileptic fits.

25-year-old Stacey Gayle was suffering as many as ten seizures every day, with medication failing to adequately control the fits.

After being forced to quit her job, she began to suspect that her music performed by her favourite artist, Jamaican rapper Sean Paul, was contributing to the collapses.

She presented at a New York medical centre, where doctors confirmed that listening to the singer triggered the fits.

"This was a very interesting opportunity to study Stacey's brain," said director of the Long Island Jewish Medical Centre, Dr Ashesh Mehta.

During the first operation 100 electrodes were implanted into the brain to pinpoint which areas were being affected by the music, with a second procedure pinpointing and removing areas of abnormality.

Gayle no longer suffers from musicogenic epilepsy.

THE red noses of clowns across the globe are out of joint after a study which found that most kids find them scary (PD Fri).

Thousands of emails from outraged funny men and women deluged the scientists who made the announcement.

Clown Care, a US-based group of clown doctors, said the sample size of the 250 children used in the Sheffield University research was "minuscule compared to the 250,000 one-to-one bedside visits made annually" by its 93 professional Kookies and Bozos.

The findings have certainly wiped the big smiles from the faces of the clown doctors.

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