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PAGE 1 Editor: Bruce Piper email: info@pharmacydaily.com.au Int'l line-up for NMS 2008

THE 2008 school year starts today, with the AMA Queensland urging parents to make healthy lifestyles a priority for their kids.

A healthy start

AMA Queensland's Kids GP Dr Kirsten Price said it was time for parents to ensure healthy changes to tuckshop menus and sports programs were also incorporated into home-life.

Dr Price said the beginning of first term was an ideal time to factor in healthy lifestyles practices, with plenty of sunlight left in the day once school finishes for families to be active outside, as well as the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables for preparing school lunches.

AMA Queensland has welcomed both the State and Federal Government's commitment to making obesity a national health priority in 2008, and will continue to lobby for the implementation of a national obesity strategy to help curb the growing epidemic.

"If everyone does what they can to help improve their lifestyle then we will start to see results, but there also needs to be a further push from all governments to help Australians take control of their health for the future," Dr Price said.

NSW wins cricket

THE NSW team defeated WA in last week's Chemists Interstate Challenge Cricket Shield.

NSW scored 9/251 from 50 overs, while WA was bundled out for 115 in 28 overs in the final played in Mittagong in the NSW southern highlands on 26 Jan.

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THREE international academics have been confirmed as key speakers for the National Medicines Symposium 2008 (NMS).

The line-up includes Jean Slutsky, Director, Center for Outcomes and Evidence, US Dept of Health and Human Services, who will focus on An ageing world: implications for QUM; Dr Anita Hardon, Professor Anthropology of Care and Health, University of Amsterdam, who will address The Place of Medicines in Society; and Professor Rachel Elliott, Lord Trent Professor of Medicines and Health, University of Nottingham, UK, who will present a White Paper on QUM in the Political

FeelGood expansion

THE FeelGood Guide will expand its system into a full 'front of store' health offer for independent pharmacies.

The exclusive deal with store designers Angley & Arrowsmith comprises modular and systemised design elements and significant retail features that aim to boost sales by increasing average sale, reducing walkouts and increasing the frequency of customers and attracting new customers.

Peter Lusted, CEO of FeelGood Guide, said the deal offers "an opportunity for independent pharmacies that are looking for a strong health proposition."

PBS changes

THE criteria for the diabetes drug pioglitazone (Actos) will be widened next month to allow its use as triple therapy in combination with both metformin and a sulfonylurea.

Other PBS changes coming up include the delisting of nasal HRT preparation Aerodiol (oestradiol hemihydrate), which is being withdrawn by the manufacturer and will no longer be available on the PBS from 1 May 2008.

Economy.

Also part of the program is a panel discussion, facilitated by Rhonda Galbally AO, CEO of Our Community, which will discuss the policy and economic implications of quality use of medicines in the current healthcare setting in Australia.

Organised by the National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) and the Pharmaceutical Health And Rational use of Medicines (PHARM) Committee, the fifth biennial symposium is to be held at the National Convention Centre in Canberra 14-16 May.

Full details of the symposium are available at www.nps.org.au.

RGH e-bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy e-Bulletin gives a rundown on oral famciclovir whbich was approved about a year ago in Australia for the treatment of cold sores.

Recent advertising has raised public awareness of Famvir.

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

Pill should be OTC

THE contraceptive pill should be made available over the counter to take advantage of its strong protective effect against ovarian cancer, according to an editorial in last week's Lancet.

The article followed a review which estimates current levels of contraceptive use will prevent at least 30,000 cases of ovarian cancer worldwide a year.

Oxford University-based epidemiologists, including Australian Professor Valerie Beral, examined data from 45 studies and found that five years of contraceptive use reduced ovarian cancer by almost a third, while risk reduction was 15% among women who used the pill up to 29 years previously.

DISPENSARY CORNER

AND you though Australian hospital food was bad.

A patient in Finland was horrified when he found a mouse head among the steamed vegetables on his plate.

Officials at the Northern Karelia Central Hospital insisted that the man's health hadn't been compromised in the incident, which they said probably originated in a bag of Belgian vegetables.

However the hospital chief said "Understandably, the patient lost his appetite."

HOW about this for a retail promotion?

A pyramid of 45,000 champagne glasses more than 7m high was constructed last week in Antwerp, Belgium to celebrate a shopping centre's 15th birthday, rais money for charity and set a new world record.

Reports don't say how much champagne was be required to fill the entire pyramid (pictured *below*) but one estimate put it at about 10,000 bottles of bubbly!





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