



The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia

## This week's update from the Guild

### Generic Medicines

On 1 August, community pharmacy in Australia will implement the biggest changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) since its inception 60 years ago.

For the past two years, the PBS Reforms have been a hot topic for pharmacists, but from 1 August pharmacy customers will also start to take notice, particularly with regards to generic medicines.

In this year's Federal Budget, the Government decreased funding for a national public information campaign on generics from \$20 million to about \$5 million.

Despite this, there will still be a big media push on generics from just before 1 August onwards, as the Guild and other industry stakeholders are planning independent campaigns to promote greater understanding and increased usage of generic medicines in Australia.

The Guild will utilise its radio, television and print mechanisms to support this objective, as well as assist in the production of a generics-focused Community Service Announcement for television.

As a result of these promotions, the Guild expects that pharmacists and pharmacy staff will receive an increased number of enquiries from consumers who want to know more about generic medicines.

In the interest of preserving the excellent reputation of community pharmacy, it is crucial for pharmacists to maintain their patient-centred approach during the implementation of the PBS Reforms.

With this in mind, all pharmacy staff should be properly prepared for increased interest in generics and have protocols for handling such enquiries.

## Aust health 'near the top'

AUSTRALIA is among the healthiest nations in the world, according to a report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The *Australia's health 2008* report showed falling death rates for cancer, heart disease, strokes and injury, and also revealed that Australian life expectancy is almost the longest in the world - second only to Japan.

The AIHW attributed this to the decline in Australian smoking rates, which are now among the



### Kos at Press Club

GUILD President Kos Sclavos will make an historic address to the National Press Club in Canberra on Wed 23 Jul.

It's the first time the Guild has addressed the club, and the momentous occasion will be telecast on the ABC.

Sclavos is expected to speak on the future of pharmacy as a frontline health provider.

### Inhale correctly

NINE out of ten Australian are incorrectly using their inhalers and as a result suffering worse symptoms, according to the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research.

A survey involving 116 Sydney adolescents and adults found only 10% used their inhaler correctly, usually breathing at the wrong time with "puffer" inhalers and breathing and positioning the device wrongly for sucking-type, dry powder inhalers.

lowest in the world.

However some groups lag behind, with indigenous and disadvantaged Australians likely to have shorter lives, higher levels of risk factors and lower use of preventive health services.

In ranking order, the greatest improvements in health could be achieved through reductions in smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, physical inactivity, high blood cholesterol and excessive alcohol consumption, the report concluded.

### UK pill move

WOMEN in Britain are now able to legally order the contraceptive pill online under a new service launched yesterday.

Patients visiting DrThom.com have to fill in a questionnaire, and a doctor from the company can follow up if necessary.

"We see the DrThom service as part of an ongoing trend - a trend consistent with UK government policy - to help women access contraceptive services as close to their home as possible," said a spokesman.

### Retail warning

BUSINESS confidence among manufacturers of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) is down, with 45% saying conditions have deteriorated over the last year.

That's the finding of research released by The Nielsen Company yesterday, with most firms citing escalating petrol prices and inflation as causes of concern.

### Pharmacor profit

THE new owner of Pharmacor, Jean Pierre Salama (*PD* yesterday) has pointed out that the figures reported in the latest ASIC documents relate to the period before the company officially launched in Jul last year.

The figures showed a \$1.35m loss for the year to 30 Jun 07 but Salama told *PD* this morning that the business only started marketing in earnest after that date.

### Breast cancer site

A NEW website has been launched to help educate health professionals about possible treatment options for women nearing the end of tamoxifen therapy for breast cancer.

Letrozol (femara) is an aromatase inhibitor indicated and reimbursed in Australia for hormone-dependent breast cancer after five years of tamoxifen therapy, and the site at [www.lifeafterfive.com.au](http://www.lifeafterfive.com.au) discusses this treatment option.

### DISPENSARY CORNER

THE latest social lubricant could end up being a hormone.

Scientists in the US have found that oxytocin, produced naturally during sex and childbirth, could "offer hope to people blighted with shyness."

Recent trials have found that oxytocin can reduce anxiety and ease phobias, with researchers saying it "may offer a safe alternative to alcohol."

A DISABLED man found slumped in his motorised wheelchair on a Queensland motorway has been charged with drink driving.

According to court records, police allege the 64-year-old recorded a near-fatal blood alcohol reading of 0.301, which is more than six times the legal limit.

The wheelchair had apparently come to a halt in an exit lane in the highway near Cairns, forcing drivers to detour around him.

Officials insist that drink driving offences apply to wheelchairs, even though the drivers don't need a licence.

## D I G I T A L 4 2

- Video wall presentations for corporate events or reception areas
- Internal presentations for managers or employees
- Training DVDs
- Commercials or corporate presentations from inception to script writing, video recording, voice overs, graphics, and editing to the finished product.
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