

Medical certificates

A FORUM about pharmacists issuing medical certificates will be hosted in Adelaide next month by the Guild, PSA and Guild Insurance.

Speakers from the three organisations will host a panel discussion, with Jenny Bergin, director of the Guild's Community Pharmacy Practice Division to outline the importance of issuing medical certificates for the future of professional services.

The practical components of medical certificates will also be discussed, incl a presentation from a physiotherapist already implementing the service.

Attendance is free for PSA and Guild members.

The forum will be held on Thu 03 Apr at the University of South Australia - more info and registrations on 08 8304 8300.

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HOT Travel Deals

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* new travel feature.

Each week we plan to highlight a couple of great travel deals which we're sure will be of interest to everyone in the pharmacy industry.

With winter approaching head for the sun in Fiji on a **Blue Lagoon Cruise** around the beautiful Mamanuca and Yasawa islands. A great deal is available on cruises upto August, a 6 night cruise for the price of 3 nights. Prices start from \$2099pp including return air from Sydney, all onboard dining and a night pre and post cruise at the Sheraton Fiji Resort on Denarau Island. Visit www.ecruising.travel for more.

If cruising appeals, then claim a place in history by sailing on the QE2 before she retires in November. Cabins are still

Apr PBS price reductions

THE Pharmacy Guild earlier this week advised members of a range of PBS price cuts which become effective from 01 Apr.

Reductions of 12.5% apply to a number of products due to the addition of new brands, including Carvedilol which has had a Sigma brand (Dilasig) of all four strengths launched.

Other 12.5% cuts apply to gemfibrozil due to a new Pharmacor variant, as well as metronidazole solution for IV infusion which has had a new Sandoz brand added.

Sandoz is also offering enalapril maleate with hydrochlorothiazide but the 12.5% price cut applies only to the hydrochlorothiazide component, with the enalapril already reduced previously

Salbutamol sulfate will also drop by 12.5% due to Pharmacor,

VLCD diet success

A VERY low calorie diet (VLCD) may be used safely up to one year, according to specialists in Melbourne.

A trial reported in the *Medical Journal of Australia* described a 59-year-old man who weighed 170kg losing over 70kg after he was given meal replacement formulas for five months and low-fat meals over the next seven.

It's the first proof that the diet could be used safely beyond the usual 2-4 month diet period.

available on select voyages. Fares start from \$2769 pp for an 8 night voyage departing Southampton on 27 April bound for the south of France, Portugal and Spain. A 20 night roundtrip departs Southampton on 10 September visiting Canada and New England, priced from \$8649 pp.

Or sail into Sydney on the worlds biggest ocean liner, **Queen Mary 2**. Departing from Los Angeles and arriving on 26 February 2009, the 15 night voyage is priced from \$4709pp. Visit www.cunardline.com for more info.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

A GERMAN pensioner is suing health workers after a mixup left her with a new anus, rather than the leg operation she was expecting.

The surgical team at the hospital in Bavaria has been suspended after operating on her backside due to confusing her with an incontinence patient.

A number of reports on the controversy say the incident was a "bit of a bummer."

DOCTORS in Russia are worried about a spate of alcoholism after the launch of a special type of vodka just for women.

Dubbed Damskaya or "Ladies' Vodka" the product is aimed to be "sipped with salad after a workout in the gym."

It's the brainchild of Igor Volodin, who defended the move by saying that "In Moscow there are pink taxis for ladies, there are light cigarettes."

"But there was no vodka, and we asked ourselves why?"

"More people suffer from diabetes in Russia than from alcoholism, but no one bans chocolate advertisements."

A FRENCH wine expert has insured a vital part of his body.

Ilja Gort, who produces Tulipe Wines at the Chateau de la Garde in Bordeaux, has had a special policy created, worth about \$9m, to cover the loss of his nose and sense of smell.

"The nose and sense of smell of a winemaker are as important as the fingers of a chef," said one of the policy underwriters, Jonathan Thomas.

"This certainly is an insurance policy not to be sniffed at."

Genepharm and Sandoz brands of both strengths of the nebuliser solution single dose units, while the 100mg and 400mg strengths of Fluconazole solution for IV infusion will also drop by 12.5%.

The Guild said the other Apr price cut of note was for Nizatidine which is subject to a 10% reduction.

Members were advised to carefully monitor their ordering of these items over the rest of the month.

QUM workshop

CONSULTANT clinical pharmacist Debbie Rigby is one of the key speakers at a QUM educational event to be held on 06 Apr in Lismore, northern NSW.

The QUM Services in Aged Care Homes seminar is on at the Northern Rivers University Department of Rural Health and costs \$27.50 inc GST.

Other presenters include Dr Lisa Nissen of the University of Queensland school of pharmacy, and Dr Geraldine Moses who manages the Adverse Medicine Events Line.

The one-day seminar is aimed at accredited pharmacists conducting RMMRs and associated QUMM services in aged care homes - more info 02 6622 4453.

Zoloft court case

A VICTORIAN woman has launched legal action against her teenage daughter's doctor, claiming the 16-year-old became suicidal and violent as a result of a severe adverse reaction to antidepressant medication Zoloft.

The case begins today in Melbourne in the state Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal, with the mother also claiming she didn't give informed consent because the possible side-effects of the drug weren't explained.

The *Australian* newspaper today reports that although currently selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors aren't approved for the treatment of those under 18 because of elevated risks of suicidal thinking and self-harm, the TGA is "in the process of strengthening its SSRI warning to include 18 to 24 year olds because of these same concerns in this age group."

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