

# Pharmacy DAILY

Thursday 16th April 2009

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## NPS PPI warning

**NATIONAL** Prescribing Service has launched a new program which warns prescribers about possible rare adverse effects as a result of taking proton pump inhibitors.

The NPS said that many patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease will not need long term PPI therapy so when patients request a repeat "best practice would be to assess if ongoing therapy is still necessary."

The program suggests that a 4-8 week program of standard dose PPI therapy should be used to control symptoms along with lifestyle changes, followed by a step-down approach thereafter.

## Coles sells Pharmacy Direct

**THE** Pharmacy Guild is claiming a major victory against the push by supermarkets into pharmacy, with the sale of Pharmacy Direct by Coles confirmed yesterday.

The new owner RX Direct Pty Ltd, a company owned by the pharmacist members of the Terry White Chemists Advisory Board.

RX Direct Pty Ltd said it's entered into an agreement with now.com.au Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Coles owner Wesfarmers Limited to acquire all the shares in Sydney Drug Stores Pty Ltd, which owns the Pharmacy Direct business.

The directors and shareholders of RX Direct Pty Ltd are all pharmacists registered in NSW, and the acquisition has been approved by the NSW Pharmacy Board.

The new owners include Trevor Coober of Qld, Barry Schultz of SA, Adrian Staltari of WA, Gary Linton of Vic, Rhonda and Terry White of Qld and Gary Hand of Qld.

They said they plan to "develop the Pharmacy Direct business organically, to expand the online retail strategies of Terry White Chemists."

They said they also propose to offer equity participation in the company to the pharmacist members of the Terry White Chemists franchise group.

The Pharmacy Guild said the sale vindicates its stand on the issue,

which saw it successfully take legal action in the NSW Supreme Court.

The court ordered that the Coles Group subsidiary transfer its shares to persons permitted to have a pecuniary interest in a pharmacy in NSW - namely a "registered pharmacist, a pharmacists' partnership or a pharmacists' body corporate".

"The successful outcome in the Supreme Court proceedings demonstrated the resolve of the Guild to prevent supermarket chains, such as Coles and Woolworths, seeking ownership or pecuniary interests in pharmacies in contravention of the law," the Guild said yesterday afternoon.

Although there is legislation across Australia which reserves pharmacy ownership to pharmacists, when the Coles group purchased the Pharmacy Direct business the NSW Pharmacy Board failed to prevent the acquisition or challenge its legality, the Guild said.

"If the Guild had not urgently committed to devote significant funds, by way of legal costs, to challenge the acquisition by the Coles Group, a large pharmacy business would have remained in the hands of a supermarket chain - an outcome not in the best interests of the provision of quality pharmacy services," said Guild President Kos Sclavos.

## Pharmacist prosecuted

**MEDICARE** Australia says its current audit program has resulted in the successful prosecution of 29 individuals, including one pharmacist, as a result of its ongoing PBS and Medicare audits.

The current national compliance program has targeted particular areas including unapproved pharmacies and "claiming after the death of patients, which is a continuing area of concern."

More than 1000 desk and field audits have been completed, with targets identified through research and data analysis as well as info from a variety of sources including calls to the fraud hotline.

Over \$2.2m in incorrect payments has been identified since 01 Jul 08.

## Cough mix crackdown

**THE** US Congress has approved a new law which aims to target the bulk sale of dextromethorphan, a cough syrup ingredient which is sometimes diverted for use as a recreational drug.

The Dextromethorphan Distribution Act makes it a violation for any unfinished dextromethorphan to be possessed, received or distributed by anyone who's not registered as a drug manufacturer or licenced to engage in the practice of pharmacy.

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## Same sex safety net

**MEDICARE** Australia has reminded pharmacists that same sex partners and their dependent children can now access the PBS Safety Net as a family, under changes recently introduced to the National Health Act 1953.

The changes give the same access to the benefits for all couples regardless of gender.

To be included as part of a Safety Net family, a couple must be living together on a permanent basis, unless living separately due to illness.

## PSA NSW lecture

**THE** NSW Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of NSW will hold an evening lecture on Bone Mineral Density at the Campbelltown RSL Club on Tue 28 Apr from 7.30pm.

The lecture, which is free for PSA members/\$75 for non-members, will be presented by Dr Terri Foran and provides 2 CPD points.

Details on 02 9431 1120.

## Locum service now for all

**THE** Pharmacy Guild has announced that its Emergency Locum Service (**PD 09 Apr**) is now accessible by metropolitan and hospital pharmacies, in addition to those located in rural and remote Australia.

The service, operated by the Pharmaceutical Locum Company, comprises a central toll-free phone number, fax and website which pharmacists can contact if they're in need of an emergency locum.

It was set up in recognition of the vital services that rural and remote pharmacists play in their communities, and for those pharmacies the provision of the emergency locum is funded under the program.

The change will see hospital and metropolitan pharmacies able to now access the locum service, but they will have to cover the cost of the locum themselves.

"This change will make it easier for metropolitan community

pharmacies and hospitals to find a reliable locum in emergencies," said Guild President Kos Sclavos.

"Finding a locum at short notice can be extremely difficult, especially for one-off or short stints. Access to the Emergency Locum Service assures pharmacists that, no matter where they are, their patients will continue to be provided with best practice health care," he said.

Sue Muller, director of the Pharmaceutical Locum Company, said the changes would provide improved services for pharmacies across Australia.

"Patients rely on their community pharmacy, so there is no way the pharmacy can be closed if the pharmacist is unavailable due to an emergency," she said.

"That's why the Emergency Locum Service is so important for metropolitan, as well as rural and remote pharmacists."

The Emergency Locum Service can be contacted on 1800 357 001 and there's also a website about the program at [www.els.com.au](http://www.els.com.au).

## FDA lice approval

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has approved Benzyl Alcohol Lotion 5% as a new prescription medication for the treatment of pediculosis capitis, for use in patients six months of age and older.

It's the first head lice product approved by the FDA with benzyl alcohol as the active ingredient.

## Vic Guild briefing

**NEXT** Tuesday 21 Apr at 7pm the Victorian branch of the Pharmacy Guild will hold its next member briefing, with items for discussion including Nurse on Call, Mirixa and the Emergency Supply of Medicines.

The venue will be the Guild's offices at 40 Burwood Rd, Hawthorn and it costs \$44 to attend incl dinner - 03 9810 9999.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**NOT** exactly typical COPD.

A Russian surgeon was astonished when he removed a "perfectly formed" fir tree from the lungs of a 28-year-old patient.

When Artyom Sidorkin began coughing up blood and complaining of severe chest pains doctors thought he had developed lung cancer, and decided to operate to remove the tumour.

However when the patient was opened up they found a two-inch long spruce tree had taken root inside his body.

"I blinked three times and thought I was seeing things," said surgeon Vladimir Kamashev at Ishevsk Hospital in Moscow.

The surgeon now believes that Sidorkin inhaled a tiny seed which began growing in his lung, with the sharp pains caused by the roots and needle-like leaves poking into his chest cavity.

**A WELSH** grandmother has come up with a perfect dietary solution to an infestation of snails in her garden.

59-year-old Oriole Parker-Rhodes said she wasn't willing to trample on or poison the gastropods, instead choosing the questionably more humane control method of eating them.

She claims the escargot are higher in protein and lower in fat than beef, and serves them 12 at a time with salad, garlic, parsley or butter sauce and bread.

"They're perfectly good meat," she said, and is encouraging other similarly-minded "organic, permaculture sorts of people" to emulate her eating exploits.

In fact she's so keen on the idea that she's set up a special website containing some of her recipes at [eatinggardensnails.blogspot.com](http://eatinggardensnails.blogspot.com).

## HOT Travel Deals

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

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

**AS** winter approaches many of us are starting to think about holidays in warmer climes.

What about a trip to exotic **Mauritius** in the Indian Ocean? Air Mauritius this morning announced never-before seen prices, including five night packages starting at just \$1209 per person+taxes from Perth or \$1439pp+taxes ex Melbourne.

You must book these deals with your travel agent by 25 June in order to not miss out; more info at [www.fiestaholidays.com.au](http://www.fiestaholidays.com.au).

Or if you want to head in the opposite direction, why not consider some new offers from

Hawaiian Airlines and travel firm Travel2 which has packages to **Las Vegas, San Diego, Los Angeles or San Francisco** starting at just \$1556 including return airfares, five nights accom, airport transfers and stopover options in **Hawaii**.

The deals must be booked by 20 Apr - [www.hawaiianair.com.au](http://www.hawaiianair.com.au).

Or for something a bit closer to home, **Fiji** is an absolute bargain with the country's Reserve Bank yesterday devaluing the Fijian dollar by 20%, meaning Aussie dollars buy a lot more there.

Travel agents will have lots of cheap Fiji packages so book now!



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