

# Pharmacy DAILY

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PHARMACYDAILY.COM.AU

## Rural research

**THE** Pharmacy Guild has commissioned Rural Health Education Development Consulting to undertake a project focusing on rural pharmacy workforce issues.

The study will track the rural pharmacy workforce and identify the impact that the rural incentive programs managed by the Guild have on retention in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia.

"This study aims to understand what fulfils and motivates a pharmacist to work and stay in rural practice, so we can... encourage growth and sustainability of the rural pharmacy workforce," said Guild president Kos Sclavos.

The project will also investigate whether the location of pharmacy schools has any impact on rural retention.

See [www.rhed.com.au/pharmacy](http://www.rhed.com.au/pharmacy).

## SHPA hails delay

**THE** Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia has praised the gov't's postponement of the chemotherapy budget measure, (PD 15 Apr), particularly welcoming a promise that patient safety and access to chemotherapy medications won't be compromised by the move.

SHPA said it was concerned the measures would fail to reimburse for the range of pharmacy services provided in the private sector and in underfunded public hospitals.

## API half year profit up 8%

**API** has this morning reported an 8.7% overall increase in net profit for the six months to 28 Feb to \$6.7m with the result impacted by a 40% drop in EBIT for its Retail division.

The \$7.6m Retail figure, down from almost \$13m last year, was due to the "significant investment in repositioning and building the Priceline brand during the period," said API ceo Stephen Roche.

"Customers are responding exceptionally well to our franchised retail pharmacy offer," he said, with Priceline Pharmacy front of store growth up 11.1%.

During the last few months Priceline has undergone a brand revamp, along with a strategy of converting company-owned Priceline stores to franchises.

16 new Priceline Pharmacies opened during the half, he said. Roche also confirmed that the Priceline ClubCard loyalty scheme had seen more than 150,000 new members since Nov, with members now accounting for 40% of sales.

API's Pharmacy Division reported an EBIT of \$24.7m, up almost 25% on last year on strong revenue growth of over 10%.

Roche said the retail services offer was continuing to drive sales and profitability for member pharmacists of its Soul Pattinson, Pharmacist Advice and

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independent programs.

He said API well placed to work successfully through the second phase of the PBS reforms, through its Alphapharm partnership and API's "demonstrated performance in handling the first phase of changes, and in negotiations around our compensation from the government's Community Service Obligation fund."

## MA PBS checklist

**MEDICINES** Australia has today urged the government to compare Australia's PBS spending growth with that in other OECD countries when making policy decisions affecting the scheme.

Speaking at the *Future of the PBS* conference, MA ceo Ian Chalmers posed key questions including whether expenditure on the PBS is replacing or reducing expenditure in other areas of the health budget; and if public spending on the PBS relative to GDP is greater than the OECD average.

He highlighted PBS growth of 1.8% in real terms over the last three years as comparing "very favourably" with the 6.5% growth over the last 50 years.

Chalmers said the answers to his questions support the recent Guild commissioned studies which show that "we have a sustainable PBS."

## Outsmart online

**PHARMACY** assistants are being encouraged to undertake smoking cessation training via a new Outsmart Cigarettes online program from Pfizer.

The web-based information aims to empower pharmacy assistants to engage with customers and provide up-to-date smoking cessation advice tailored to individual customer needs, the company said.

It's been developed in response to research showing that on average pharmacies handle up to 50 smoking cessation enquiries each month - of which about half are handled by pharmacy assistants.

"Playing the initial, yet crucial role in the quit journey, it's important for pharmacy assistants to have the expertise and skills to provide relevant and useful advice to help their customers in their quit attempt," Pfizer said.

There are three learning modules each taking about 20 minutes to complete, addressing commonly asked questions about smoking and giving up cigarettes such as how smoking affects the body, why cigarettes are so addictive and ways to quit smoking.

Each participant who completes the program will receive a certificate and those who register by 31 Aug go into a draw to win one of 50 \$100 gift vouchers. - see [outsmartcigarettes.com.au/pharmacy](http://outsmartcigarettes.com.au/pharmacy).



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## Pharmacy Nicorette TV promo

A NATIONAL television campaign aiming to align community pharmacy with smoking cessation aid Nicorette will launch next week across the country.

It's the latest Gold Cross 'Ask Your Pharmacist' initiative to reinforce pharmacy as the destination for professional healthcare support.

The five week campaign during May will culminate with World No Tobacco Day.

"The combination with Nicorette supports everything Pharmacy stands for in consumer healthcare," said Guild President Kos Sclavos.

"A strong brand targeting the big community health issue of smoking that is dedicated to Pharmacy distribution and supported by the proven recognisable image of the Gold Cross will be a powerful and compelling communication."

Sclavos said that the nicotine replacement therapy category had changed significantly over the past few years, with the launch of Champix (varenicline) and the shift of Nicabate to grocery.

"Grocery self-selection and GP prescriptions are now competing for pharmacy-recommended

smoking cessation solutions," he said.

"Pharmacists should make every effort to take control of their own environment by maximising opportunities to promote those NRT products that are specifically focused on the pharmacy channel."

He said that despite the changing landscape there was still scope for enormous growth of NRT within pharmacy, with about 3 million smokers in Australia, the majority of whom are contemplating quitting or would like to quit.

"The Nicorette 'Ask Your Pharmacist' national TV campaign taps into this 'quitter' insight, supports pharmacy as an advice destination and ensures Pharmacy remains in the forefront of smoking cessation," Sclavos said.



ABOVE: Kos Sclavos celebrates the new TV campaign with Max Johnson, President of Johnson & Johnson Pacific.

## 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.

**KANGAROO Island** in South Australia is encouraging Aussies to recharge their batteries by enjoying its native wildlife, secluded beaches and spectacular natural landscapes.

There's currently a Double Deal Sale with four nights accom for the price of three available at more than 40 participating properties, starting from \$247 per person including the return SeaLink ferry fare for your car.

See [www.sealink.com.au](http://www.sealink.com.au).

If you want to enjoy some ultimate luxury, the top class **Peninsula Hotels** across the world are offering a range of bonuses

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And why not treat mum to a Yarra Valley break at the five star **Chatea Yering** in Victoria.

Flight Centre Hotels has a package from \$615 per night including a three course a la carte dinner and breakfast as well as a special gift box - 1800 005 125.

## Pandemic alert now at level 5

THE World Health Organization overnight increased its alert level for swine influenza to level 5, meaning there's been verified human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries.

It's the first time that Phase 5 has ever been declared, with the WHO basing its decision on increasing numbers of unexplained cases among people not exposed to travellers or places where high rates of transmission might be expected.

"All countries should immediately activate their pandemic preparedness plans," said WHO director-general Margaret Chan.

The Pharmacy Guild has issued a 'Fact Sheet' for community pharmacies giving an overview of symptoms and risks for both customers and pharmacy staff, online at [www.guild.org.au](http://www.guild.org.au).

The government's National Incident Room isn't currently advising the routine use of face masks by pharmacists and their staff, but says surgical masks should be offered to any person suspected of having influenza.

Use of oral antivirals such as Tamiflu is only advised for suspected or probable cases of swine flu within 48 hours of symptom onset.

Roche says it's in constant communication with wholesalers to ensure supplies of Tamiflu.

The manufacturer discounted media reports about a shortage in Qld, saying it's received and filled orders for all major wholesalers in the state in the last 48 hours.

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

A KNOWLEDGE of first aid didn't help a motorist in Germany who was given a parking ticket after pulling over to help a heart attack victim.

42-year-old Steve Schiltewolf saw a woman collapse as he drove through the main street of Wolfratshausen and pulled over to render assistance.

"I knew the best thing was to just get her an ambulance and the last thing I was thinking about was where and how long I could park my car," he said.

After waiting for paramedics he returned to the vehicle to find a parking policewoman writing out a ticket, with his protestations and explanations ineffective.

"I know traffic wardens have a reputation for being miserable and hard-hearted," he said, adding that "It looks like it's true."

A ONE-ARMED half-blind golfer has managed to overcome his disabilities by hitting a hole-in-one at a UK golf course.

45-year-old Alan Perrin is a former soldier who was forced to retire after suffering horrific injuries during a training accident.

During a recent round he thought his ball was lost after hitting a one-handed drive.

"We spent five minutes looking but didn't want to hold up the next group so we moved on.

"When those behind us saw the ball in the hole, I was stunned," he said.

Perrin said he took up golf after the accident because "it is one sport where the rules are the same if you are disabled."

BLEACH is one of those household products useful for just about everything - including treatment of eczema, according to a group of US researchers.

In a study of 31 children they found a significant improvement in chronic eczema in those who had small amounts of bleach added to their bath water.

Experts warned the treatment could be extremely dangerous and should only be done under specialist advice.