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## PAC on mental health

**THE** upcoming Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Pharmacy Australia Congress will include a session in its Therapeutic Updates stream highlighting pharmacists' roles in mental health.

The talk, titled *Early Intervention in Mental Illness and the Role of the Pharmacist*, will be presented by Professor Ian Hickie who's executive director of the Brain & Mind Research Institute at the University of Sydney.

Hickie said that in the context of the recent development of collaborative care models of mental health treatment it's being proposed that community-based pharmacists "require specific training to intensify their capacity for work with customers to whom they are dispensing psychiatric medication."

PAC will also include a wide range of other sessions covering subjects of clinical and professional interest for pharmacists - [pac2009.com.au](http://pac2009.com.au).

## Chemo move a 'major win'

**HEALTH** Minister Nicola Roxon has issued an official statement confirming that the government has reconsidered the proposed Intravenous Chemotherapy Supply Program (**TD** yesterday).

Rather than introducing it as previously proposed on 01 Sep, Roxon said the measure will now be delayed, with the govt intending to discuss it further "in the context of negotiations for the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement."

She said the government remains committed to reducing the wastage of chemotherapy medicines, but despite ongoing discussions with stakeholders a number of matters remain outstanding.

Roxon highlighted one issue with breast cancer medicine Herceptin, saying the manufacturer Roche is still deciding whether it could be provided in different vial sizes in Australia to help reduce wastage.

She said delaying the move and putting into the agreement negotiations would "enable the measure to be implemented in the context of improving the efficiency of pharmacy dispensing arrangements and reducing inefficiencies and waste incurred through existing practices."

Guild President Kos Sclavos described Roxon's statement as "a major win," with the Guild looking forward to discussing the arrangements in the context of the Agreement negotiations.

"The Guild is pleased Minister Roxon acknowledged the original proposal had unintended

consequences on those pharmacies impacted by the measures," he told **PD** last night.

A range of other bodies also welcomed the reprieve, with Cancer Voices Australia and other groups including the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia issuing a statement saying they now understand that the budget measure "will not be introduced, if at all, before July 2010."

"We have an opportunity now to achieve proper reforms to the way chemotherapy is managed and funded," said Stuart Giles of the Community Pharmacy Chemotherapy Services Group.

"This reprieve will give us the chance to demonstrate to the Government that there is a better way through which puts patient safety first, instils more transparency to the system and delivers a saving for taxpayers."

## NDPSC issues urgent agenda update

**THE** National Drugs and Poisons Schedule Committee this morning issued an urgent update to the agenda for its upcoming meeting in Oct (**PD** Wed), saying the initial document contained "incorrect or incomplete information."

A newly issued 'corrigendum' details changes, including that the proposal for rescheduling of diclofenac (Voltaren) involves increasing the pack size limit for S2 from 20 dosage units to 40 dosage units - rather than 100 as in the original document.

The committee will also now consider the rescheduling of famciclovir (Famvir) "in divided preparations" from S4 to S3 when used for the treatment of cold sores in immunocompetent patients.

The closing date for pre-meeting submissions is 16 Sep 09.

See [www.tga.gov.au/ndpsc](http://www.tga.gov.au/ndpsc).

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## FIGHT BRITTLE NAILS WITH PHYTONAIL

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Joanne Campbell from the Gosford Hospital Pharmacy Department, who was the first reader yesterday to tell us that each Phytonail pen contains 300 single applications.



If your nails are thickened and brittle with a whitish appearance this may indicate a fungal infection.

PhytoNail is a new way to treat infected nails or toenails.

Each day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a PhytoNail pen, valued at \$79.95 each.

Unlike creams or ointments, its formula rapidly penetrates the nail to the very source of the infection. As a result the appearance of nasty-looking nails is improved.

PhytoNail is quick, convenient and easy-to-use. It comes as a handy pen applicator so you can use it anytime, anywhere.

For your chance to win a PhytoNail pen, email through the correct answer to the following question below:

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Email your answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

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## CPD Calendar

**WELCOME to Pharmacy Daily's** Continuing Professional Development Calendar, featuring upcoming events, conferences and opportunities for pharmacists to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**22 Aug:** PSA will hold a **Clinical Therapeutics Update Seminar** presented by Debbie Rigby and Geraldine Moses in Brisbane - [mandyc@psaql.org.au](mailto:mandyc@psaql.org.au).

**28-29 Aug:** The Pharmacy Assistant Conference (NSW) will be held in Sydney including the State Finalist Awards Dinner - [www.guild.org.au/nsw](http://www.guild.org.au/nsw).

**30 Aug-3 Sep:** The annual **Pharmacy Snow Business Conference** is taking place at Mt Buller in Victoria - see [www.medici.com.au/study-tours](http://www.medici.com.au/study-tours).

**3-8 Sep:** The 69th FIP World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science, Istanbul - [www.fip.org/istanbul2009](http://www.fip.org/istanbul2009).

**16-19 Sep:** **Pharmacy 2009: The Pharmacy Management Conference** will be held at the Hyatt Regency Sanctuary Cove - [www.pharmacyconference.com.au](http://www.pharmacyconference.com.au).

**10-11 Oct:** Debbie Rigby and Geraldine Moses will present a Stage One Accreditation Medication Management Review Workshop in Townsville - details 07 4725 8915.

**15-18 Oct:** The PSA's Pharmacy Australia Congress 2009 will be held in Sydney - [www.pac2009.com.au](http://www.pac2009.com.au).

**5-8 Nov** SHPA will hold its 35th **National Medicines Management Conference** in Perth - [www.shpamm2009.com](http://www.shpamm2009.com).

**16-23 Jan 2010:** Pharmacy Study Tour in Aspen, Colorado - [www.medici.com.au/study-tours](http://www.medici.com.au/study-tours).

**4-17 Feb 2010:** PSA Expedition Education conference in Chile and Patagonia. Limited to 50 people - 1300 139 293.

**28 Apr-7 May 2010:** The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai, China - more information 1300 139 293.

## Guild urges award intervention

THE Pharmacy Guild has hailed reported "imminent intervention" by deputy PM Julia Gillard in relation to the horticulture industry, in which she's expected to act to "avert the disastrous consequences for that industry of the award modernisation process."

A statement issued overnight by the Guild says similar intervention is necessary for pharmacy "to save jobs and preserve the flexibility of employment for thousands of workers."

The Guild said the new Pharmacy Industry Award 2010, scheduled for implementation from next Jan, will "sharply restrict the flexibility of employment of thousands of casual and part-time employees in community pharmacy, the majority of whom are women."

It warned that the award would also impose "steep increases in wages costs through new penalty rates which will force many of Australia's 5000 community pharmacies to shed jobs or change the hours they operate."

Guild President Kos Sclavos said the award was a threat to the continuing operation of community pharmacy in its role as a provider of primary health care to the Australian community.

Particular concerns cited including changes which would see casual staff deemed as part-time employees from 01 Jan, meaning they would lose casual loading and

flexibility.

The new award also contains a requirement that 48 hours written notice be given for an emergency change of roster, which the Guild described as "simply ludicrous."

Penalty rate provisions will impose additional total wage costs estimated at up to 22% in some states, the Guild added.

"Unlike other industries that can adapt to such measures by increasing prices to consumers, community pharmacy is restricted by the fact that the price to consumers of most Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines is set by Federal Government Policy," Sclavos said, adding that "there is no ability to pass on wage increases."

**IN CONTRAST**, last week Jacki Baulch of the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia said she was hoping the Guild would be advising members "how to implement the new legislation rather than how to avoid it."

## US ibuprofen alert

THE US Food and Drug Administration has announced that it's issued warning letters to eight companies marketing unlawful OTC topical drug products containing ibuprofen.

Under the FDA's OTC system some products are allowed to be marketed without first obtaining agency approval, and these include some items containing ibuprofen for oral use.

Currently in the US there are no approved applications for topical ibuprofen products.

## Cut-price vaccinations

US supermarket chain store Safeway is promoting special "in-store" seasonal flu vaccinations, with the move estimated to save US\$100m when compared with the cost of vaccines given by doctors.

And that's not all - Safeway is also offering full service immunisation services for shingles, tetanus, hepatitis, pneumococcal and meningococcal meningitis.

A press release didn't specify who gives the injections, but hopefully it's not checkout staff.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**JAPANESE** politicians are grappling with a major dilemma at the moment.

The country is in the lead-up to a major election, but with swine flu rampant many candidates are reluctant to interact with voters.

"Shaking hands during an election campaign is key, so this is pretty troubling," said one of the nominees, Denny Tamaki.

"It would be bad if I get infected myself and then pass it on to older people with weaker immune systems," he added.

It's understood that the pandemic has also made the common political practice of kissing babies very unpopular.

**THERE** was a hair care crisis in Serbia earlier this week, with police called when a furious customer attacked her hairdresser over a perm gone wrong.

Ruzica Radovic reportedly became hysterical after seeing her hair in a mirror after treatment at a beauty parlour in Novi Sad, insisting that she hadn't asked for curly hair.

"When we got a call from the shop we thought that there was a criminal in there attacking the staff," said a police spokesman.

"But instead what we found when we got there was an extremely angry lady who was unhappy with her hairdo."

The distraught customer had to be calmed with a sedative administered in hospital.

**PARTY-POOPING** scientists in the USA really don't want anyone to have fun.

They've found that while candle-lit dinners may be very romantic, they could also be harmful to your health.

The researchers from South Carolina State University analysed the fumes released by burning candles, finding that paraffin wax candles released toxins linked to lung cancer, as well as having the potential to exacerbate asthma.

They suggested it was safer to switch to candles made from beeswax or soy.