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PAGE 1 Editor: Bruce Piper email: info@pharmacydaily.com.au

PBS medicines supply review

A REVIEW of supply arrangements for PBS medicines in residential aged care facilities and private hospitals has moved onto the next stage.

Following a consultation process between Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA) and key groups, a discussion paper was prepared and published in December.

The deadline for responses was extended until 30 Jan at a request from a number of stakeholders

In Apr stakeholders will attend workshops in Canberra, Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, Darwin, Sydney and Brisbane to discuss potential options for improving existing arrangements.

Participants will assess the feasibility of the various options proposed; to register see www.guild.org.au for the timetable and relevant forms.

Hey big spender

CONSUMER spending on pharmaceuticals is experiencing the biggest rise of any retail sector, according to the latest figures released today.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has revealed consumers spent 16.3% more on pharmaceuticals in the last three months of 2008.

In second place, appliances and music saw a rise of 7.3%, followed by newspapers, books and liquor, all with a 4.3% increase.

Supermarkets only showed only a 1.7% increase.

The worst-hit sector was cafes and restaurants, which declined almost 13% - the largest annual decline in the 25 years that records have been kept.

PSA clarifies 5CPA role

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has distanced itself from comments made by former PSA NSW President Charlie Benrimoj, who recently criticised the dominance of the Pharmacy Guild in negotiations with the govt over the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Speaking at the Neil Naismith Memorial Lecture in Vic earlier this month, Benrimoj slammed the Guild's leading role in the talks, saying "It seems incongruous to me that one organisation, which is essentially a membership of owners, should be driving negotiations."

However yesterday PSA president Warwick Plunkett said the society and the Guild now had a "stronger and more meaningful relationship than in the past..."

"The criticism of the dominant role played by the Pharmacy Guild in the CPA process is now outdated and therefore misplaced," he said.

Plunkett downplayed Benrimoj's suggestion that the PSA should have equal representation with the Guild in the talks, saying "the PSA representation of one third of the Negotiating Committee membership seems appropriate."

Plunkett said the PSA and Guild needed to maintain a united front in their negotiations with the govt to get the best outcome.

Health fund freeze

THE Health and Hospitals Fund will not receive any money this year, Health Minister Nicola Roxon has confirmed.

The \$10 billion promised for the fund between 2007 and 2009 has been halved, with a freeze on any funding in the near future.

Two pages today

TODAY'S *Pharmacy Daily* has two pages of news and photos, including pictures from last night's Mirixa roadshow event in North Sydney on page 2.

Pharmacy Daily is continuing to grow strongly, with more than 4400 subscribers across Australia - sign up free at our website www.pharmacydaily.com.au.

New Blackmores pain product



LAST night Blackmores launched a new range of products, including a Back Pain Formula based on a "clinically trialled dose of an extract of the herb Devil's Claw".

Blackmores director of education Pam Stone said that Devil's Claw had been shown to symptomatically relieve lower back pain in 2-4 weeks, with the product particularly targeting people who are concerned about the long term effects of regularly taking NSAIDs.

The new mobility range also includes Blackmores Joint Formula Advanced, which is a new twice-daily formulation of glucosamine

and chondroitin in a highly compressed tablet form.

Stone told *PD* the new formula has more chondroitin to "replicate the doses used in the best trials."

There's also a new Powdered Magnesium product, in a water-soluble form which makes the magnesium highly bioavailable.

Blackmores also confirmed it would shortly launch a new range for children, including a product called 'Day Care Defence'.

Stone is pictured above at last night's launch event with Blackmores group product manager Neal Mercado.



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New Medical Chief

PROFESSOR Jim Bishop AO has been appointed as the new Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, replacing incumbent Professor John Horvath.

Bishop will play a key role in developing and administering big reforms aimed at transforming Australia's health system.

Prof Bishop is Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW, Professor of Cancer Medicine at the University of Sydney, a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia.

The Power of Pharmacy...

LAST night it was the turn of pharmacists in the north of Sydney to learn about Mirixa, with about 80 pharmacists being introduced to the system by Guild President Kos Sclavos.

Set to be officially launched at the APP conference on the Gold Coast early in Apr, the first Mirixa program to be implemented in Australia will target chronic therapy patients with a low MedsIndex compliance score.



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Guild

iNova continues growth

INOVA Pharmaceuticals appears to be bucking a trend for downsizing in the pharmaceutical industry, yesterday announcing plans to lift staff, production and capacity this year.

Growth strategies will include selective geographical expansion, business development, and product in-licensing activities.

iNova has recruited Norbert Walther to replace outgoing cfo Chand Khanna, who's retiring this month, and has also taken on Mark Lews from IMS Health to lead the "commercialisation

execution across the company."

And the firm's new Australian/NZ gm Peter Mayrick will take up his role in the next few weeks, moving from Pharmed (Innovex) /Inovail Australia/NZ.

iNova is also spending over \$2m on additional equipment for its Sydney manufacturing facility.

CEO Andrew Howden said "Product acquisitions and in-licensing initiatives are paramount to iNova's future development."

He confirmed that iNova was also developing plans to enter the Chinese market "very soon".



ABOVE from left at last night's workshop: Annmarie Reeve, Barkers Pharmacy Roseville; Marcus Langman, Harrison's Pharmacy; Chabel Azzi, Alphapharm; Robin Salvestro, Priceline Pharmacy Griffith; and Natsha Menzies, Oze Pharmacy.

LEFT: Also at the North Sydney event, from left: Adam Lawson, GlaxoSmithKline; Faray Gobran, Gardners Rd Day & Night Chemist; Georgia Spinoulas, Gardners Rd Day & Night Chemist; Sylvia Hanna, Pulse Warringah Mall Pharmacy; Bianca Esposito, GlaxoSmithKline.

DISPENSARY CORNER

A MAN in the USA has buried the cremated remains of his mother in an Insight Vacations travel bag, because she had always enjoyed her annual holiday with the company.

During a recent travel show in Los Angeles, the tour operator's sales director was approached by a man in his early 50s.

The man said his mother had recently died, and the family had had her cremated according to her will.

When searching for an appropriate vessel to contain the ashes they came across an unused Insight travel bag, which she had saved for her next tour.

Considering her love of travelling with the tour operator the family placed her urn in the Insight bag and buried it.

AND speaking of funerals, a man in Montenegro has survived a bizarre suicide bid.

52-year-old Milo Bogisic walked into a funeral parlour and paid cash for a coffin which he selected from the showroom.

He asked puzzled staff to wait while he scrawled out a quick obituary, then jumped into the casket, pulled out a gun and shot himself before the stunned undertakers could stop him.

Incredibly, doctors in Podgorica were able to save him after the bullet passed through his chin and nose, missing his brain, according to police.

"He was suffering from some family problems and was devastated that he hadn't managed to end it all," said one of the investigating officers.

Bogisic won't be cheered up by the undertakers either, who have refused to give him a refund on the coffin.

"He'll get some proper use out of it one day," said a staffer.



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