



Guild Update

This week's update from the Guild

National Student Business Plan Comp

Pharmacy students from Sydney University will defend their entrepreneurial honour in a national competition on the Gold Coast in August.

As part of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's National Student Business Plan Competition, students from Sydney will join those from Curtin University in WA and James Cook University in Queensland to see which new pharmacy model will claim the ultimate prize.

Students from 11 universities across the country have been developing their ideas and checking their sums in what has been the most competitive and well patronised event to date.

Developed in 2006 by the Guild to promote innovation and excellence in the community pharmacy environment, the National Student Business Plan Competition helps students prepare for the challenges of setting up their own small business.

Students gain valuable practical experience, not only in demonstrating the financial viability of their plan, but also how they will capture market share, pay and manage staff, decide on capital and return on investment and a host of other regulatory and pecuniary challenges.

Winners in 2008 and title-holders Sydney University provided an innovative compounding pharmacy model, while the teams from Curtin and James Cook specialised in women's and Indigenous health issues respectively.

This year, the three finalists are competing for over \$15,000 in cash and prizes provided by Pharmaceutical Defence Limited and Gold Cross Products and Services. The students will pitch their business models to a captive audience as part of the Pharmacy Women's Congress on the Gold Coast in August.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

APESMA hits back at PSA

THE Pharmacists' Division of the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia (APESMA) says the current Community Pharmacy Agreement (CPA) approach to pharmacy remuneration in Australia is fundamentally flawed.

Responding to comments by Pharmaceutical Society of Australia President Warwick Plunkett (PD yesterday), APESMA spokesman Geoff March said: "The CPA process is a poor mechanism to promote and achieve pharmacists' expertise in delivering health policy priorities."

Plunkett claimed that APESMA didn't understand the CPA process, but March insists that the current arrangements are too narrow and inflexible "especially with the control the Guild has over the process," adding that the PSA should face the fact that it has "little, if any, influence on the outcomes of the CPA when they run counter to what the Guild wants."

Responding to Plunkett's statement that some services need to be the subject of a separate agreement with the profession, March said: "I cannot see how the PSA can separate the provision of a wide range of integrated professional pharmacy services from the issue of funding."

He said the Community Pharmacy Agreement (CPA) is mainly about funding pharmacy for the supply and distribution of medications under the PBS and related programs, plus "a bit for professional services."

"Until the PSA decides that it should be the other way around... community pharmacy will not be integrated into the health services system," March claimed.

"Community pharmacy does not practice in isolation... we can't

Qld grants call

THE Pharmacists Board of Queensland has reminded interested pharmacists that applications for this year's round of research grants close on 12 August.

Grants are available in a number of categories including Novice, Early Career and Experienced Researcher, as well as Research Implementation and the Pharmacy College Trust Research Grant.

More info on 07 3247 4862.

retain a silo around our practice, hinging behind the CPA.

"We have SHPA looking for collaboration between hospital and community pharmacists; we have a range of trials around Australia looking at improving collaboration across that interface; we have a Minister who is talking about the imperative to remove boundaries between the professions or become irrelevant, but the inherent inflexibility of the CPA... excludes community pharmacy from being part of the answer to these issues."

However APESMA did welcome the PSA's Green and White Paper initiative, saying it would be a critically important step in integrating community pharmacy practice into the health system more effectively, and give greater opportunities for pharmacists to practice in different settings.

"It shows the direction in which PSA should be heading, namely as a change agent for the profession as a whole, rather than ineffectually supporting the CPA process."

Today's issue of PD

PHARMACY Daily today has two pages packed full of news as well as a full page promoting the PharmSpace virtual pharmacy expo which is online until 31 Jul - see page three.

NZ pharmacist convicted of fraud

A PHARMACIST from Masterton, near Wellington in NZ's North Island, has been sentenced to nine months' home detention and fined \$25,000 after being found guilty on 74 counts of fraud.

An audit by the NZ Health Ministry found that Ithiel Satya, who managed Southend Pharmacy, made almost 6,000 fraudulent claims over a three year period for \$142,000 worth of medicines which were never dispensed.

Satya "habitually dispensed repeat medications even if patients had not asked for them. In a number of cases, medications were dispensed for dead patients," said a Health Ministry spokesman.

Repeats which weren't collected were returned to stock.

WIN A PRIZE FOR YOUR PET



CONGRATULATIONS to Shellea Hambleton of APHS River City Pharmacy in Auchenflower, Qld who was the winner of yesterday's competition.

Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with Rufus & Coco this week, giving readers the chance to win a jar of "Joint Aid" for their pet.

Australian pet care range, Rufus & Coco provides well-bred pet care to all furry, feathered and feline friends.

Rufus & Coco's "Joint Aid" helps to alleviate the symptoms of arthritis.

The odourless, tasteless powder is mixed in with the dog's wet food. Joint Aid contains all ingredients which have been proven to promote joint mobility, cartilage regeneration and reduce inflammation.

Rufus & Coco "Joint Aid" is available for \$39.95 in selected pharmacies and is distributed by McPherson's Consumer Products.

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Mental meds costs

RESEARCH released yesterday by national mental health charity SANE Australia has found that many people with mental illness cannot afford their medications.

The research bulletin found that 38% of respondents had an annual income of less than \$20,000, and 54% could not afford treatments recommended by their doctors.

And an astonishing 96% had to choose at times between healthcare and essentials such as food.

17% spend more than \$100 per month on medication, yet 32% were not registered with the Medicare Safety Net, SANE said.

"A group of people with mental illness are now at risk of becoming an underclass," said executive director Barbara Hocking.

"Healthcare must be made affordable for people on low incomes via targeted financial support," she added.

The survey also found that 31% of respondents were smokers, of whom almost half said they could not afford nicotine replacement therapy even though they wanted to stop smoking.

Hocking urged that with the proposed cost increases for cigarettes "subsidised NRT is urgently needed for people with mental illness as well as other disadvantaged, low-income groups to enable them to live a healthier, smoke-free life."

Nycomed looks at Solvay acquisition

SWISS drugmaker Nycomed has confirmed it's considering a bid for the pharmaceutical division of Belgian firm Solvay, which was put up for sale by its owners in April.

Initial bidders for the business were said to include Novartis, sanofi-aventis, AstraZeneca and Abbott Laboratories, but reports today say that Nycomed is the only party still interested in Solvay.

Influenza vaccine extended

THE government has announced an extension of its free influenza vaccine program for vulnerable groups from next year, with a commitment of \$44m over four years to cover an additional 2.2 million Australians.

From 1st January 2010 the National Immunisation Program - which currently provides flu vaccines at no charge for older Australians - will also cover all pregnant women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 to 50 years, and people medically at risk aged six months to 64 years - including those suffering chronic diseases including diabetes, cystic fibrosis or cardiac disease.

The influenza vaccine will be provided directly by GPs, with Health Minister Nicola Roxon saying this would mean "individuals avoid any administrative costs as a

Irish pharmacy crisis

THE government of Ireland has upped the ante in its dispute with the country's pharmacists (*PD* 06 Jul), formally acknowledging notices from up to 900 pharmacies which have advised they will withdraw from the state-operated Drug Payment Scheme on 01 Aug.

The Irish Pharmacy Union says price cuts mandated by the govt would see an average 34% loss in income for pharmacists, and the loss of up to 5000 jobs.

Health officials said they were putting in place "alternative arrangements", and had sent letters to the pharmacists urging them to facilitate this by providing records such as repeat prescriptions and dispensing records on request.

"By handing over prescription records to their clients... pharmacists can help ensure that their clients can continue to access their medications," said a spokeswoman for the Health Service Executive.

result of accessing the vaccine from a pharmacy."

Roxon said the move aimed to increase coverage amongst vulnerable groups, with the preventative health measure likely to see increased protection for the public at large as well as reduced morbidity, hospitalisation and work absenteeism.

"The current H1N1 pandemic influenza strain...has clearly reminded us that any influenza virus can have a severe impact on vulnerable people and demonstrates the importance of maximising protection for particular groups in the community," she said.

Wee week celebrated

THIS week is Kidney Health Australia's "Wee Week" which aims to raise awareness of avoiding urinary tract infections, which can lead to chronic kidney disease.

Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jim Bishop, said UTIs should never go untreated.

"Although women are more at risk of UTIs than men, anyone experiencing symptoms should go to a doctor," he said.

"Symptoms can include painful burning when urinating, feeling like you need to urinate often without being able, and cloudy or bloody urine," Bishop added.

He said risk factors for kidney disease could be reduced through healthy lifestyle choices such as a balanced diet and increased exercise.

Kidney Health Australia (KHA) and The Cranberry Institute also issued a statement about UTIs, with a recent survey showing that 57% of women suffer from the ailment.

KHA Medical Director, Dr Tim Mathew, said that cranberries had been shown to be effective in the prevention of recurrent UTIs in general practice for women prone to repeat infections.



DISPENSARY CORNER

SCIENTISTS in Japan have demonstrated a new thought-powered wheelchair.

The device, which had its development funded by car maker Toyota, has a much faster reaction time than earlier prototypes, taking just an eighth of a second to analyse brain waves and respond by moving the chair forward, left or right.

Users wear a cap fitted with electrodes, and a Toyota spokesman said the system "has the capacity to adjust itself to the characteristics of each individual driver, thereby improving the efficiency with which it senses a driver's commands."

It's still at an experimental stage, with the next phase aimed at increasing the range of commands which can be understood.

ASTRONAUTS aboard the International Space Station may be going through a few Depends shortly, after the main toilet on board stopped working.

There are a record 13 people aboard the station orbiting high above the earth at present, with NASA confirming that the "US Waste and Hygiene Compartment (WHC) was shut down after a malfunction. About six litres of pre-treat flush water is believed to have flowed into the pump separator and into other areas it should not be."

Backup facilities are available on the Russian side of the station as well as on the visiting US space shuttle *Endeavour*.

And NASA said that two crew members were working flat-out to repair the broken toilet.

"It is not an issue, at least in the near term," a spokesman said.

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