



Irish crisis escalates

MORE than 1200 pharmacists from across Ireland have held a crisis meeting in the lead-up to their pullout from the government's Community Drugs Scheme (PD 06, 21 Jul) which takes effect 01 Aug.

Irish Pharmacy Union president, Liz Hoctor, has warned that the country is "ten days away from a crisis in the supply of medicines."

She said the issue could still be resolved before the deadline.

"Does the Minister want to destroy the pharmacy network or does she want to make savings?"

Hoctor said pharmacists want to help reduce the nation's medicines bill, but the planned price cuts which have caused pharmacists to revolt "will simply not work" and will instead "undermine patient services, force thousands of job losses and widespread closure of pharmacies."

"We can help the minister make her savings but not on these terms."

Contingency plans put in place by the govt will require patients to travel to centralised hospital dispensaries to have prescriptions filled, with expectations that thousands of people will miss out.

SSRI use in children blasted

A PUBLIC lecture at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst today is set to reignite the controversy about the use of Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) such as Paxil (paroxetine) in children.

Visiting academic Dr Paul Duckett, who's a community critical psychologist at CSU's School of Social Sciences, will speak on how, in his view, the political system, the medical profession and the university sector in the UK "have colluded with the pharmaceutical industry to promote shareholder profits at the expense of public health."

He said that efforts in the UK to secure social justice and support for people allegedly harmed by the "psycho-pharmaceutical industry"

QCPP online survey

THE Quality Care Pharmacy Program is running an online survey until 31 Jul for staff from financial QCPP pharmacies, asking them how they'd prefer to receive information about remaining accredited.

See www.qcpp.com.

have implications for many Australian families.

According to Dr Duckett, last year more than 4000 Australian children aged less than 10 were prescribed Paxil and other SSRI medications.

He said the widespread use of SSRIs in children come despite findings in 2003 that Paxil's manufacturer, GlaxoSmithKline, "withheld clinical trial data for at least five years that showed the drug was clinically ineffective and increased the risk of suicide in children and adolescents."

UK reclassifications

THE British Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has announced that dimeticon 4% may now be supplied on general sale (that is, outside of pharmacies) for the eradication of headlice infestations in adults and children aged over 6 months..

The MHRA has also approved the general sale of salicylic acid 12% in combination with lactic acid 4% for the topical treatment of warts, corns, verrucas and calluses.

Hot water bottle makers in hot water

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has launched a "nationwide blitz" on unsafe hot water bottles, after the hospitalisation of more than 10 NSW people with severe burns from leaking bottles so far this winter

ACCC chairman Graeme Samuel said the commission was working with state and territory officials to test hot water bottles across the country, with unsafe brands set to be withdrawn from sale.

Mandatory standards require hot water bottles to be of an acceptable capacity and thickness, as well as meeting stringent performance tests relating to seam strength, pressure and leakages.

"This national investigation will help eradicate unsafe hot water bottles from store shelves across Australia," Samuel said.

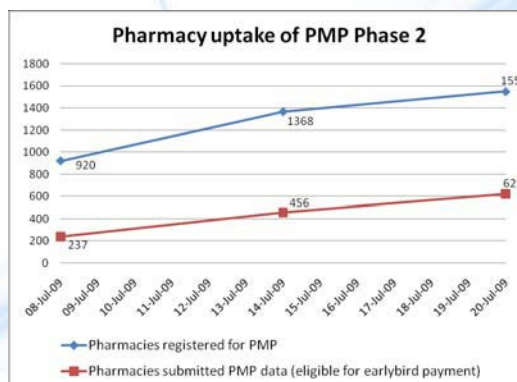
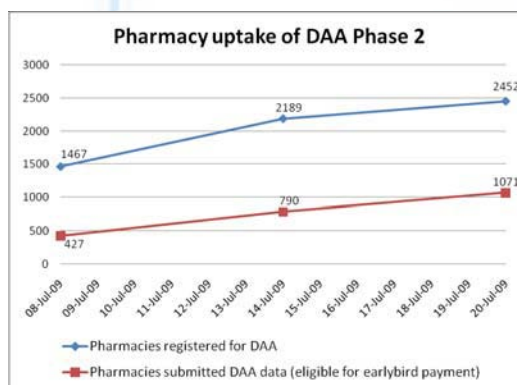
He also urged consumers to not fill hot water bottles with boiling water, and to make sure their hot water bottles are in good condition..

"Never use an old hot water bottle - most are only designed for one winter season," he said.

Which amount would you prefer? - \$3,500 or \$900?

It's a big difference - \$3,500 compared to \$900. This is what you could be paid if you complete the registration process to participate in Phase 2 of the Dose Administration Aids (DAA) and Patient Medication Profile (PMP) programs. The amount depends on whether you have registered and submitted your data in time. **31 July 2009** is the crucial date.

Uptake figures of the DAA and PMP programs (graphs right) show that pharmacies are responding to the larger payments and registering. However, there are still a number of pharmacies that have registered but not yet submitted their data (which is a mandatory part of the registration process). The blue lines on the graphs below show the number of pharmacies who have registered for each program. The red lines show the number of pharmacies who have submitted their data and are eligible to receive their earlybird payments.



Make sure you join the other 1,692 pharmacies that have successfully completed the registration process and submitted data. After 31 July 2009 you will not be eligible for the higher payment.

Earlybird registration and data payments (before 31 July 2009):

- \$2,250 (+ GST) for DAA and
 - \$1,250 (+ GST) for PMP.
- Total: \$3,500 (+GST)

Late registration and data payments (after 31 July 2009):

- \$500 (+ GST) for DAA, and
 - \$400 (+ GST) for PMP
- Total \$900 (+ GST).

So register and submit your data at www.health.gov.au/daapmp by 31 July 2009 and don't miss out!



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Electronic ciggie alert

THE US Food and Drug Administration has issued a public health warning about the use of so-called "electronic cigarettes" - battery operated devices which contain cartridges filled with nicotine and other chemicals.

Readily available in the USA both online and at retailers, a laboratory analysis has found that the devices contain carcinogens as well as a range of toxic chemicals.

WIN A PRIZE FOR YOUR PET



CONGRATULATIONS to Wendy Bailey of Abbott Diabetes Care in Eight Mile Plains, Qld who was yesterday's lucky winner.

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, valued at \$39.95 provides well-bred pet care to all furry, feathered and feline friends.

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

Is Joint Aid for dogs and cats or for dogs only?

Email your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.
Hint: Visit www.rufusandcoco.com.au.

Medication costs fall - ABS

QUARTERLY inflation figures released yesterday by the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed that the overall costs of pharmaceuticals in Australia fell by 0.6% during the three months to 30 Jun.

Health costs rose by 2.3% during the quarter, with the ABS saying the major contributors were increases in hospital and medical services, up 3.6% as well as dental services, up 0.8%.

"Pharmaceuticals (-0.6%) provided the only offsetting fall," said an official statement.

The ABS said the increase in hospital and medical services costs was mainly due to rises in private health insurance premiums which became effective from 01 Apr.

Over the last year pharmaceutical

costs have increased by 2.9%, with overall health costs up 5.2% including a 6.4% rise in hospital and medical services.

The Jun quarter CPI was up 0.5%, compared to 0.1% in the previous quarter, and in the year to 30 Jun CPI rose 1.5% overall.

Tampon sales slip

PUBLICLY listed Safety Medical Products has more than halved sales forecasts of its Pureste range of sterilised tampons, pads and liners, after Woolworths decided to stop stocking the products.

The company was previously forecasting sales to 30 Jun 2010 of \$15 million but now says it will be more like \$7 million.

Travel Specials

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.

To mark the opening of THE HAVANNAH in Vanuatu, the hotel is offering a special package deal. Until 15 Dec 09 book and pay for 6 nights and receive the seventh night compliments of the resort. Rates start from just \$3690 and include breakfast daily and return airport transfers. For more info and bookings visit www.thehavannah.com.

The FIA World Rally motor-racing Championship 2009 is heading to northern NSW from 3-6 Sep and as official hosts, PEPPERS SALT RESORT & SPA, PEPPERS BALE SALT and MANTRA ON SALT BEACH in Kingscliff are offering great deals on accommodation packages.

Rally enthusiasts can stay on the beachfront in a luxurious 2 or 3 bedroom apartment from just \$522 per room per night. Book now to avoid missing out. For reservations and more information contact (02) 6670 5000.

LONG ISLAND RESORT in the Whitsundays has launched an all inclusive pay two, stay three night deal for families wanting to escape the winter.

The offer is priced at \$420 per room per night based on 2 adults sharing with one child, and includes buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner per person per day.

It's valid for sale until 23 Aug and travel up to 24 Dec - more details Sunlover Hols 13 88 33.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

THE Church of England isn't taking any chances with the spread of Swine flu, urging British parishioners to hug rather than shake hands during church in the southern London diocese of Southwark.

There's rising concern about the H1N1 influenza pandemic in the UK, with some churches also ceasing the use of holy water and no longer sharing communion chalices to help limit any outbreak.

WE'VE heard of cameras on mobile phones, but what about a microscope?

Researchers from the University of California Berkeley have come up with an add-on to a standard cellphone (**below**) which converts it into a fluorescence microscope, with the aim of helping diagnose diseases in the third world.

The CellScope uses the 3.2 megapixel camera on a Nokia handset to capture images from conventional microscope optics, as well as electronics to help the device illuminate blood samples treated with "tagging" molecules to highlight certain types of bacteria such as tuberculosis.

The gadget has also been used to identify malaria parasites and the symptoms of other ailments such as sickle cell anaemia.

The scientists said they hoped a more robust prototype could be built for use in developing countries where diagnostic equipment is rare but mobile phones are very common.



"For the past 2 months the Success department has out-sold cold and flu and analgesics combined ...without external marketing" Emma Freebairn, Campbell & Freebairn Chemists, Inverell

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