

## Guild Update

### This week's update from the Guild

## DAA program

**THE** Guild is strongly urging community pharmacies to register to participate in Phase 2 of the Dose Administration Aids (DAA) and Patient Medication Profile (PMP) programs. It is crucial to maximise participation in these programs to help develop a possible sustainable model for delivering these services into the future.

There are attractive incentive payments for participating, and the sooner you register the greater the incentive. Pharmacies registering from 1 to 31 July 2009 will be eligible for the full incentive payment of \$2250 (+GST) for DAA and \$1250 (+GST) for PMP.

Registrations will still be accepted after July, but a lesser incentive payment will apply. The maximum total incentives available for Phase 2 for DAA is \$6500 (+GST) and \$4000 (+GST) for PMP.

Most importantly, these programs represent a crucial opportunity to demonstrate to the Australian Gov't that community pharmacies are committed to maximising health benefits for their patients.

Medication misadventure is estimated to cost the health sector \$380 million a year (Source: 'Improving Medication Safety' by the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Healthcare, 2002).

In response to feedback, the DAA and PMP programs have also been reviewed to make participation in Phase 2 easier and systems more user-friendly.

The data required has been refined for relevance and structure, and the data submission timelines have been aligned.

The DAA and PMP programs are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing under the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement and are managed by the Pharmacy Guild.

See [www.guild.org.au/pps](http://www.guild.org.au/pps) for info.



The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia

## TGA delays fee increases

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration can expect a rush of new applications in the next few days, after today advising that changes to its fees and charges for the 2009/10 financial year have been delayed.

The TGA said this morning that fees would now remain at the 2008/09 level "until further notice".

It appears that the regulations to bring in the fee increases, which have met with strident opposition from parts of the pharmaceutical industry (*PD* 19 Jun), have not yet been brought into effect.

The TGA said a schedule of its new fees and charges would be posted online immediately they have been approved, adding that

sponsors and manufacturers should therefore check the website for the applicable fee before making an application.

Fees for applications received prior to the date of effect of the new regulations will not be amended, the TGA added, while fees for applications received after the approval date will require the 2009/10 fee to be paid.

However the TGA said it would not be processing annual renewal charges for the 2009/10 financial year until after the increased levels have been approved "using the applicable annual charge for the 2009-10 financial year."

## Sanofi defends diabetes drug

**SANOFI-AVENTIS** says it's standing behind the safety of its Lantus (insulin glargine) in the light of a European meta-study reported last week which claimed a possible link between the medication and risks of cancer.

The European Association for the Study of Diabetes conducted a retrospective analysis of four patient registries, and found that in some cases Lantus patients had a higher incidence of breast cancer.

The authors pointed out that the results were far from conclusive but said they "arouse an urgent suspicion which should have consequences for the treatment of patients."

Sanofi-aventis issued a statement saying that "no definite conclusions can be drawn" from the analysis, adding that "clinical studies, which represent the gold standard of evidence, do not indicate an association between insulin glargine and cancer.

"Given the extensive clinical evidence covering over 70,000 patients and the results of post-marketing surveillance arising from 24 million patient-years of experience, sanofi-aventis stands behind the safety of Lantus," said the company's Chief Medical Officer, Jean-Pierre Lehner.

The company said it would continue to vigorously monitor the safety of Lantus in close collaboration with regulatory agencies and scientific experts.

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## APESMA pushes for new pharmacy model

**A LETTER** from Geoff March of the Pharmacists Division of APESMA has been published in today's *Australian Financial Review*, urging a "fundamental change to how pharmacists provide health services in Australia."

March was responding to previous articles (*PD* yesterday) about the upcoming Fifth Agreement negotiations, and alleges that the Pharmacy Guild is "all about funding a clique of pharmacy owners over the years that rigidly are still in an 'old-thinking' business model based on the distribution of drugs."

He claimed that outside of the so-called 'clique' "there is substantial support for change among employees and many employers.

"The supply of medicines is an important function but there is great untapped capacity for community pharmacy to contribute to the health of their clients to a far greater degree than now happens."

March wrote that despite current pharmacist training giving new graduates unprecedented skills around ensuring people get the best out their medicine, but claimed that they're not being given the working environment to utilise their skills to the benefit of the public.

"That environment will only be sustainable when a different approach to pharmacy practice is instituted," he added.

The letter also refutes a claim by Guild President Kos Sclavos that wage rises for pharmacists had been in "double digits for the past five years," saying APESMA's remuneration survey showed an average 4.1% annual increase.

## Blackmores tax man

**BLACKMORES** has appointed Greg Burgoyne as its new Chief Financial Officer, with the new role taking effect from 01 Sep.

Burgoyne is currently the Chief Financial Officer at the Australian Taxation Office.

## SA forgery protocol

**PHARMACISTS** in South Australia are being urged to immediately contact the Police Call Centre if they receive suspect forged or altered prescriptions, after a review of procedures which previously required them to forward suspect scripts to the Drug Investigation Branch (DIB).

The Pharmacy Board of South Australia said the SA Police DIB had reviewed the current practice and found that it's "not providing the best level of service."

Henceforth the police call centre will organise a patrol to be dispatched to the relevant pharmacy to initiate an investigation of the alleged offence.

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## Guild Group adds lending manager

THE Guild Group's Business Finance division, NetFin, has named Martin Reukers as National Commercial Lending Manager.

Guild Financial Services general manager, Peter Simpson, said Reukers would provide "solid strategic direction to our business financing division," which has been in operation for over a decade and "continues to add significant value in difficult credit market conditions."

Reukers has significant experience in the pharmacy and other healthcare markets through his previous roles at a number of major financial institutions.

## NPS anti-antibiotic push

THE National Prescribing Service has launched a new education program which aims to address "inappropriate antibiotic use," particularly for the treatment of respiratory tract infections.

"Prescribing for antibiotics in acute bronchitis continues, even though the illness is usually viral and antibiotics are only appropriate when a cough is the result of pneumonia or an exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease," said NPS deputy ceo Karen Kaye.

She said GPs have told NPS they often feel pressured by patients to prescribe 'something' but aren't

confident to recommend only rest, saline solution, steam inhalation (for adults) and analgesics.

Clinical features that distinguish a sore throat requiring antibiotics include fever over 38°C, exudate on the tonsils, tender cervical lymphadenopathy and the absence of cough.

"These features indicate infection by group A *Streptococcus* and require antibiotics," NPS said.

The education program includes a case study, a GP clinical audit, a Prescribing Practice Review and the latest issue of NPS news which covers 'Managing expectations for antibiotics for respiratory tract infections', with the aim of giving prescribers the facts to be confident in prescribing symptomatic treatments.

Kaye also said "home remedies such as honey and lemon, rather than a cough medicine which has limited efficacy, are the simplest and cheapest treatment options for uncomplicated acute coughs."

For more information see [www.nps.org.au/healthprofessionals](http://www.nps.org.au/healthprofessionals).

## Baby hearing tests

THE Federal Government has announced that it's seeking a commitment from all States and Territories to deliver newborn hearing screening for all Australian babies from 01 Jan 2011.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon said currently only 75% of babies are screened, ranging from 95% in some states to under 40% in others.

"Our children deserve better than this," she said, with about 500 children born every year with a moderate to profound permanent hearing impairment - many of whom are not identified until months or even years after birth.

Early detection of hearing problems can be vital in helping develop language skills, with children whose impairments are detected in the first days of life able to be fitted with a hearing device from as early as three months.

The govt said the hearing initiative was one of the improvements that Australians can expect to receive as a result of the \$60 billion in hospital funding to begin flowing to states and territories from tomorrow.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

COULD the obesity crisis be spreading into the wild animal kingdom?

An apparently sweet-toothed bear broke into a home in California this week, and ignored vegetables in a family's fridge before gobbling down a whole box of chocolates.

A spokesman for the local police department claimed the bear had also unsuccessfully tried to open a bottle of champagne.

AN ANTI-SMOKING group in Saudi Arabia is offering an all-expenses-paid wedding as a prize in a competition aiming to encourage young men to give up cigarettes.

The Purity group is advertising the campaign using the slogan: "Kicking the habit is on you, and marriage is on us."

To enter the competition, participants must complete a seven day stop smoking course, with the grand prize wedding winner announced in a draw next month - as well as 20 runners-up who will receive free furniture.

The charity said hundreds of men had already signed up - with interest also expressed by a number of non-smokers who planned to start lighting up just so they could take part.

PROFESSIONAL cyclists should consider freezing their sperm before starting rigorous training, according to Spanish researchers.

A study found that top triathletes who covered more than 300km a week on their bikes had less than 4% normal sperm count, which would lead to "significant fertility problems."

The impact on sperm quality only correlated with their time spent on the bike, rather than running or swimming.

Professor Diana Vaamonde from the University of Cordoba Medical School said factors affecting the sperm were likely to include tight clothing, stresses on the body from the strenuous exercise, as well as "friction of the testes against the saddle."

## WIN AN ICE AGE 3 PACK



We've already received lots of entries in this week's *Pharmacy Daily* competition, in which there's an \$80 Ice Age 3 prize pack up for grabs - including this one from Christine Flage of API:

*Ice Age Elastoplast Band-aids help little ones forget their wounds by distracting them with the colourful pictures and favourite characters to choose from. They become very proud of their injuries when they are sporting an Elastoplast Bandaid from the fabulous movie Ice Age 3!*

*Pharmacy Daily* & Elastoplast know how unsettling it is for you and your child when they take a little tumble.

Have your child playing silly like Sloth again and protect their small wounds with NEW Elastoplast Ice Age 3 strips.

Not only will the plasters help the wounds heal faster, but the character strips are a great way to put a smile back on their face as they pick out their favourite character strip.

To coincide with the release of Ice Age 3 in cinemas, *Pharmacy Daily* & Elastoplast are giving away an Ice Age 3 prize pack, valued at over \$80 to one lucky reader this week.

For your chance to win this prize pack containing one Ice Age 3 double season pass, a kite, lunch box, height chart and five boxes of Elastoplast Ice Age 3 & Heavy Fabric Strips, simply send in an answer to the weekly question below to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au):

**Tell us how you think Elastoplast and Ice Age 3 can make small tumbles forgotten.**

All entries must be submitted by the end of the week.

To view the Ice Age 3 product info, visit [www.elastoplast.com.au](http://www.elastoplast.com.au) and click on 'spending time with kids'.

Please note: The product may vary from images shown.

