



The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia

### This week's update from the Guild Swine 'flu threat highlights role of Community Pharmacy

THE recent viral events that commenced in Mexico and gradually spread to other parts of the world have highlighted the key role of community pharmacies as health care destinations for medicines and advice.

While the exact scale of the threat of influenza A(H1N1) is still to be determined, the escalation of the pandemic alert by the World Health Organisation has made it a major concern and talking point in pharmacies across Australia.

The Pharmacy Guild has endeavoured to provide up-to-date information and advice on our website ([www.guild.org.au](http://www.guild.org.au)) throughout the past week, in a rapidly changing situation.

One area of confusion has been supply lines for some products including Tamiflu, Relenza, 'flu vaccine, and face masks, and the Guild has tried to ensure that members have appropriate advice – for themselves and to pass on to members of the public.

If the threat of a full scale pandemic does not materialise – and fingers crossed that this is the case – we will have learned much about our readiness for such an event.

The Guild will be keen to ensure – internally and through our relationship with the Federal and State Governments – that those lessons are taken on board and utilised to make our level of readiness across the community even higher into the future.

## More PBS reform required?

IN order to realise significant further savings in its pharmaceutical budget the govt "may need to move away from a fee-for-service model and consider alternative models for pharmacists' remuneration".

That's the conclusion of a report published in this month's *Australian Health Review*, which gives an overview of the PBS reforms.

Author Rebecca de Boer, who's a

### FDA Botox warning

THE US Food and Drug Administration has ordered that a boxed warning be added to safety labels for all botulinum toxin products, after reports of serious adverse events, with effects spreading from the area of injection to other areas of the body.

The FDA also said there was "potential for serious risks associated with the lack of interchangeability among the three licensed botulinum toxin products."

### Pre-mixed Rotarix

GLAXOSMITHKLINE says its rotavirus vaccine, Rotarix, is now available in Australia in a pre-mixed form which does not require reconstitution.

Before rotavirus vaccines were introduced on the National Immunisation Program, rotavirus induced disease accounted for about half of all hospitalisations of children under five years of age.

senior researcher at Parliament House, said that the current model for reimbursement "may provide an incentive to charge prices approximating the copayment.

"When this occurs, savings are essentially captured by the retailers," she said.

De Boer also said the significant policy changes of the last two years have not advanced the objectives of the National Medicines Policy (NMP), instead "adding complexity to what was already a complex system."

"It appears that the overarching policy objectives for the PBS and pharmaceutical policy are focussed on cost containment and cost recovery rather than the objectives articulated in the NMP," she said.

### New Herron range

HERRON has launched what it's calling "Australia's first 100% Pure range of herbal supplements."

The company says all herbs used in the products are screened for quality and contamination by heavy metals, herbicides and pesticides.

They come with a 'Ten Point Purity Pledge' that they will be free of gluten, dairy products, artificial colours and flavouring, animal testing and chemical excipients during encapsulation.

The range includes Milk Thistle, Ginseng & Withania, St John's Wort and Valerian - [www.herron.com.au](http://www.herron.com.au).



## DISPENSARY CORNER

HEALTH officials in New Zealand have reportedly told the public that if they suspect they have contracted swine influenza they should sound their car horn outside their doctor's clinic three times and wait for help.

The *New Zealand Herald* said the "toot three times" protocol would allow doctors and nurses to protect themselves before taking patients into isolation.

However there doesn't appear to be any protection for pharmacy staff in the NZ policy, with pharmacists instructed to sell Tamiflu without a prescription - but only to people who "apply personally and show obvious flu-like symptoms."

AN unusual not-so-healthy push is underway in the Chinese province of Hubei, where the Gong'an county government has ordered public servants to smoke an annual quota of locally made cigarettes or risk being fined.

Departments which fail to reach targets will be disciplined, according to a report in the *Global Times*, which said staff must puff their way through 230,000 Hubei-produced packs a year.

"The regulation will boost the local economy via the cigarette tax," said a local official.

There's stiff competition among Chinese cigarette brands, with Hubei-produced Huanhelou ciggies under severe pressure from competitors in the neighbouring Hunan province.

PHARMACIES across the country may have noticed a number of customers strangely dressed as aliens yesterday.

The odd get-ups were apparently part of global celebrations for international Star Wars day, in which fans of the movies go about their usual daily tasks dressed up as Wookies, Jedis, robots, battle droids, Darths and Imperial Storm Troopers.

It's believed that the participants greeted each other with the traditional saying from the films: "May the Fourth be with you."

## WIN AN EVOKE BODYSPRAY



Evoke has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week giving readers the chance to win a can of Evoke Bodyspray.

Knock 'em dead with the bold range of Evoke body sprays, perfect for girls who dare to live on the wild side.

With killer fragrances and a hot, edgy look, the Evoke perfume body mists are a must-have for any girl who just wants to have a whole lotta fun!

For your chance to win your very own bodyspray bottle, simply send through the correct answer to the following question:

What colour is Stiletto Sista?

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

The first correct entry received each day will win!

Hint: Visit the Evoke Bodyspray website at: [www.playtruthdare.com.au](http://www.playtruthdare.com.au).

Congratulations to Sarah Bowen, a pharmacy student from Charles Sturt University who was yesterday's winner.