



US narcotic theft

A PHARMACIST in the USA has been charged with stealing prescription medications, after a long-running scheme in which he diluted drugs for to patients in order to feed his own drug habit.

Over a six month period Jeffrey Gregory is alleged to have stolen thousands of narcotic pills and "gallons of Hydrocodone cough syrup" from his employer.

The thefts weren't easily discovered because they involved real doctors, patients and prescriptions.

Consumers are being warned that if their medications look different to normal they "should not assume they are getting a different generic equivalent."

Chemo waste 'unavoidable'

PLANNED changes to the way chemotherapy drugs are dispensed (PD 15 Apr) are likely to force cancer patients, particularly those in regional Australia, to travel further, wait longer for treatment and pay more for their medication.

That's the conclusion of the Community Pharmacy Chemotherapy Services Group (CPCSG), a national coalition of pharmacists responsible for the delivery of chemotherapy treatments used at private hospitals.

The changes were due to take effect 01 Jul but the Guild managed to delay the budget measures by two months to allow discussions with pharmacists, doctors and patient groups (PD 28 Apr).

The proposed new Intravenous Chemotherapy Supply Program (ICSP) is based on the mistaken assumption that it's possible to avoid wasting reconstituted chemotherapy drugs, the group said.

"This idea that surplus medication from one patient can be used for another at some later date shows a complete and continued lack of understanding of how cancer sufferers are treated," said CPCSG spokesman and Qld community pharmacist Stuart Giles.

"The Federal Government showed it does care about cancer patients in regional Australia by announcing, in its Budget, \$560 million in funding for new cancer

centres outside of major cities.

"But what is the good of such centres if we can't offer treatment there when the patients actually need it and in a manner they can afford," he said.

The group is urging concerned pharmacists to write to their local Federal and State Members as well as the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing about the controversial cost-cutting ICSP measure.

Six swine flu cases

THE sixth Australian case of influenza H1N1 has been officially confirmed, with Health Minister Nicola Roxon telling a TV show this morning that a Mexican woman visiting the country has tested positive to the virus.

"This changes almost hourly," she said, with the new case following yesterday's diagnosis of three Melbourne children who recently returned from a holiday in the US.

Neutrogena sunscreen move



NEUTROGENA yesterday officially launched a new range of sunscreens which will be released in Aug, in time for summer.

The Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Dry-Touch Sunscreen utilises new Helioplex technology, developed after more than 10 years of research.

Helioplex technology claims to absorb UVA and UVB rays, and then transform it into infrared light, leaving the UVA & UVB filters intact.

It thus provides photostable, durable protection, meaning it won't break down or lose its ability to protect the skin, when exposed to

sunlight.

The Neutrogena Ultra Sheer range offers broad-spectrum protection from both UVA and UVB rays.

It also features Dry-Touch technology, so has a lightweight, clean feel that won't leave the skin greasy.

The range will contain products for the Body - Lotion and Mist in SPF 15+ and 30+, and the Face in SPF 30+.

Pictured above at the launch are Dr Curtis Cole, Senior Director of Technology, Johnson & Johnson; and Kathy Cavill, Franchise Director Johnson & Johnson.

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STOCK EXCHANGE

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* Stock Exchange column, where the industry is able to promote close to expiry or surplus items.

Today's column is an "item wanted" from Lewis Pounentis, proprietor of Payneham Road Chemplus Compounding Pharmacy in Royston Park, South Australia.

Lewis is looking for a second hand NOMAD trolley; if any PD reader can help out please contact him on 08 8362 3081 or via payneham@chemplus.com.au.

If you have items you'd like to offer (or obtain) through PD's Stock Exchange column email stockx@pharmacydaily.com.au.

New Cairns clinic

THE Federal Health Department has signed an agreement with Balance! Healthcare for the establishment of the \$5m Cairns GP Super Clinic.

The new clinic will operate from seven sites across Cairns, with a central hub in a new building within a planned medical precinct in the city's south and a number of "allied health spokes" across the area.

Health minister Nicola Roxon also said changes announced in last week's budget would see doctors relocating to the Far North Queensland city from capitals would be eligible for new rural relocation incentives.

New NPS PPI practice review

NATIONAL Prescribing Service yesterday announced a new Pharmacy Practice Review, with the aim of helping pharmacists deliver best practice care for patients who have been prescribed proton pump inhibitors.

The 'counselling and action resource' is one of the activities of the 2009 NPS therapeutic program on prescribing and use of PPIs for health professionals.

NPS deputy ceo Karen Kaye said the review would allow pharmacists to "self-assess their practice against pharmacist competencies and professional practice standards to determine training and development needs.

"Pharmacists participating in NPS activities are committed to providing patients with best-practice

Orphan additions

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has updated its list of orphan drugs, with the addition of Novo Nordisk's Norditropin Simplex and Norditropin Nordiflex (somatropin (rbe)) injection solution multidose cartridges for the treatment of Prader-Willi Syndrome.

The list also now includes Novartis' Zometa (zoledronic acid) for the treatment of paediatric patients with severe osteogenesis imperfecta.

Accounting

Legal

Financing

Investments

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 Guild



DISPENSARY CORNER

A BREAKTHROUGH in prosthetics has been made at a clinic in Hungary, where a stork has been fitted with an artificial beak.

The *BBC* reported that the beak was probably damaged when the bird flew into a brick wall.

The lower beak was repaired in an operation, while an expert in dental prostheses created a new top beak out of resin.

Officials said the bird would be released into the wild once it makes a full recovery.

Without the operation it would have needed hand feeding for the rest of its life.

AND speaking of prostheses, an obese woman in the UK who lost a leg to diabetes went on a crash diet, losing so much weight that she needed eleven new artificial legs in one year.

61-year-old Judy Stanley weighed about 127kg when she lost her left leg four years ago as a result of type 2 diabetes, and decided on a drastic change of lifestyle.

Her new diet of fresh fruit, red meat and vegetables saw her lose more than 50kg, with lots of encouragement from her Limb Centre which told her "you lose the weight and we'll build the legs."

THE organisers of the upcoming Winter Olympics in Vancouver have already faced some drug-related controversy, after claims that their planned torch (pictured) looks like a marijuana cigarette.

A recent newspaper article dubbed the torch and its curved designs as "The Olympic Toke" - in contrast to the official line which is that the high-tech torch aims "to represent canada through the contours of winter landscapes and lines of winter sports."

The torch was unveiled in Feb to mark the one-year countdown to the Games.



\$25k fine for Sanofi

SANOFI-AVENTIS has been fined \$25,000 by the Medicines Australia code of conduct committee, over its controversial deal with the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute which provided research funding linked to sales of Plavix (*PD* 29 Apr).

A formal complaint over the "sponsorship deal" was lodged by La Trobe University's Ken Harvey.

The committee has issued a draft decision finding that the arrangement, which offered 25c in funding for each packet of Plavix sold, had the potential to interfere with a doctor's independence.

The ruling, which is subject to appeal, also insists that the manufacturer should cease linking donations or sponsorships to prescription sales.

Baker IDI said it had expected to raise \$500,000 a year from the deal.

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HOT Travel Deals

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.

TRAVELLERS who have some flexibility are often able to cash in on the best deals, such as this one from **Banyan Tree**.

In celebration of its 15th anniversary, the group is offering "best of" savings of up to 50% at its Banyan Tree and Angsana brands, including the Banyan Tree Phuket, when booked from 01-15 Jun for travel from 01 Jun - 30 Sep - www.banyantree.com.

Or, for pharmacists in Victoria, The **Esplanade Resort and Spa** on Gippsland Lakes has released a Winter Escape package starting from \$499.

The deal includes two nights

accommodation in a one-bedroom apartment, sparkling wine on arrival, breakfast for two each morning and dinner and spa vouchers.

See esplanaderesort.com.au.

If, on the other hand, you are looking for something a bit different, **P&O Cruises** is offering Spring Savings aboard the *Pacific Sun*, with a seven-night cruise starting from just \$1099 per person twin share, departing from Brisbane on 14 and 21 Nov.

The itinerary calls at Noumea in New Caledonia and Lifou, Loyalty Islands and Port Vila in Vanuatu.

For info see pocruises.com.au.