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Guild Update

This week's update from the Guild Mirixa moves on

With Ask Your Pharmacist Week 2009 now in full swing, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia is pleased to announce that its most exciting new initiative Mirixa Australia™ is powering forward.

Four programs— Seretide, Lipitor, Simvastatin and Pravastatin – are now up and running, with over 2000 pharmacies and some of Australia's leading pharmaceutical manufacturers now signed up to participate.

Mirixa Australia™ programs provide a systemised clinical service underpinned by an integrated web-based platform that enables pharmacists to better assist patients who are not taking their medicines as intended.

The pharmacist intervenes to help encourage the patient to stick to the script through four formalised discussions over a one year period.

The result of this technology and professional intervention is a significant benefit for patients, at no extra cost. Complying with medicines (sometimes known as medication compliance or adherence) is of proven benefit to health.

It is also of benefit to taxpayers because better health outcomes that keep people out of hospital longer are innately good for the sustainability of the system.

GlaxoSmithKline, a long time supporter of community pharmacy, was the first company to partner with Mirixa Australia™ - for the medicine Seretide, with Pfizer Australia signing up for Lipitor shortly after.

For further information on Mirixa Australia™ visit the Guild website at www.guild.org.au and click on the "IT & e-HEALTH" heading on the left-hand-side menu and follow the links. Alternatively phone 1300 MIRIXA (1300 647 492).



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Guild welcomes new report

THE Pharmacy Guild says it's delighted that pharmacists have been specifically mentioned in the Prime Minister and Minister for Health's response to the draft of Australia's first national Primary Health Care Strategy, which was released late yesterday.

The strategy was prepared by an External Reference Group which comprised a number of eminent health professionals, including Tasmanian pharmacist and Guild councillor Judith Liauw.

It focuses on what the government can do to improve the frontline health care that Australians depend on "including the care delivered by GPs and other frontline health professionals like physiotherapists, psychologists and pharmacists," in the face of challenges including the ageing population, rising rates of chronic disease and the need to address the health needs of rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

Guild President, Kos Sclavos, said four key priority areas detailed in

Aspirin debunked?

A UNIVERSITY of Edinburgh study, presented this week at the European Society of Cardiology Congress in Barcelona, has found that risks of taking aspirin as a preventative measure could outweigh the benefits.

The research looked at 3350 asymptomatic people aged 50-75 - half on aspirin and half on placebo.

There was a total of 357 heart attacks and strokes - 181 in the group taking aspirin, and 176 amongst the placebo group.

However 2% of those taking aspirin were hospitalised because of gastrointestinal bleeding, compared to 1.2% of the placebo group.

RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin deals with drug interactions with urinary alkalineisers, which are all unscheduled preparations and can be purchased OTC in pharmacies.

Interactions are possible with a range of other medications including amphetamines, lithium, memantine, ephedrine/pseudoephedrine, and hexamine hippurate.

The bulletin is available free from chris.alderman@health.sa.gov.au.

the draft strategy were addressed in the Guild's action plan put into place in 2005: improving access and reducing inequity, better management of chronic conditions, increasing the focus on prevention and improving quality, safety, performance and accountability.

He said the Guild's focus on chronic disease and the pharmacists' role led to the development of the MedsIndex compliance score, as well as the "systemisation and e-health enablement of Mirixa and eRx.

"These e-health systems allow greater accountability and performance measurement of pharmacist interventions," he said.

"The preventative health role of pharmacists continues through various agreement and Government programs, and these should be expanded on."

Sclavos said there were no great surprises in the report, "although it is refreshing to see the greater focus on allied health professionals and the expanding role of pharmacists."

He said the Guild would continue to work cooperatively with the government "to ensure vision is turned into reality for the good of all Australians.

"While other health groups talk about changes in health, the Guild is actually getting on with the job of building a new improved health system," Sclavos concluded.

Guardian program stitched up

GUARDIAN Pharmacy says its 11th annual Guardian Angel Knitting Program has seen a fantastic response, with more than 85,000 garments collected so far.

The promotion aims to highlight each pharmacy's profile and contribution to their local community by donating items knitted by customers via the Salvation Army to Australians in need.

Guardian said the program also increases foot traffic by encouraging knitters to pick up a free knitting book instore and returning donations to the pharmacy.

This year Spotlight was also a campaign partner, supplying patterns and discounts on wool to further encourage participation.

Drugs of dependence script change

THE Victorian Health Department has amended its criteria for computer-generated prescriptions, removing a previous requirement for drugs of dependence which required only one item to appear on a script.

The move became effective 20 Aug, with existing requirements including the necessity to handwrite particulars remaining.

Software programs must automatically indicate that the handwritten entry is required, with the prescriber having to note the name of the substance or the proprietary product containing it, the strength, the quantity being prescribed (in words and figures), adequate directions for use and the number of repeats authorised (in both words and figures).

Sep PBS changes

THE Health Department this morning confirmed new PBS listings for Sep, including the addition of Clonea (clotrimazole cream 10mg per g) for the treatment of fungal infection in an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

Clonea is listed as a streamlined authority under the 04-05 budget measure "Improving the capacity of the PBS to meet the needs of indigenous Australians," and is an alternative for clotrimazole lotion.

Other additions include Lansoprazole (Zoton FasTabs) for the treatment of peptic ulcer.

The formulation is bioequivalent to lansoprazole capsules, and will replace these when they're removed from the Australian market.

Sculptra (Poly-L-lactic acid) has been listed for HIV-related facial lipatrophy (PD Thu), while there's also a new formulation of silver sulfadiazine cream (Flamazine) as a replacement for Silvazine cream.

Sodibic (sodium bicarbonate) capsules have also been added to treat metabolic acidosis associated with chronic renal impairment.

The Section 100 listing for Thalidomide has also been amended to make it available for people who are newly diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

Cladribine, fotemustine, irinotecan hydrochloride trihydrate, raltitrexed and topotecan hydrochloride have also all been shifted to streamlined authority.

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New MATES module

THE Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services has released its latest module, titled 'Reviewing medications to reduce risk of falls'.

The module includes a brochure aiming to help veterans recognise the risk factors associated with falling and encouraging them to talk to their doctors about falls prevention.

There's also a therapeutic brief to help health professionals identify veterans at risk of falls, particularly those related to medications.

See www.veteransmates.net.au.

Heart rate finding

AN AUSTRALIAN study released overnight at the European Society of Cardiology Congress has found that lowering heart rates in angina patients with coronary artery disease and left ventricular dysfunction using Coralan (ivabradine) could cut the relative rate of hospitalisation due to myocardial infarction by 42%.

Coralan isn't currently PBS-listed.

National Board announced

YESTERDAY the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council announced the appointments to the ten new Boards for the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions.

The boards include the new national Pharmacy Board, with the appointments made to enable them to begin preparatory work for the commencement of the scheme on 01 Jul 2010.

The National Pharmacy Board has been expanded to now comprise eight practitioner and four community members, with the ministers saying they were responding to feedback on their May decision about the size of the board which was originally set to have nine members rather than 12.

The Dental, Medical, Psychology, Physiotherapy and Nursing and Midwifery Boards were also expanded to 12 members.

The ministers also decided that "to underline the independence of

an external accrediting authority," the chair of a national board cannot also be a member of the board of an independent accrediting authority, and the chair of an independent accrediting authority cannot also be a member of a national board.

Practitioner members of the Pharmacy Board of Australia are Rachel Carr (WA), Trevor Draysey (SA), Ian Huett (Tas), William Kelly (ACT), Gerard McInerney (NSW), Bhavini Patel (NT), Tim Logan (Qld), and Stephen Marty (Vic), who's also the board's Chair.

The board's community members are Mary Edwards, John Finlay, Laila Hakansson Ware and Karen O'Keefe.

It's understood that the inaugural meeting of the new Pharmacy Board of Australia will be held later this month.

MEANWHILE the Ministers have also agreed to a number of changes to the proposed legislation.

Boards and health complaints bodies will not only have to inform each other of complaints received relevant to each other, but must also consult on how complaints are handled and reach agreement on whether a complaint will be taken further by the board.

They have also agreed that occupational therapists will be added to the national scheme from 01 Jul 2012, as well as Chinese medicine practitioners, medical radiation practitioners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers.

New blood pressure online resource

THE National Stroke Foundation has launched a new web-based tool to help the community to manage their blood pressure and reduce the risk of stroke.

The move is part of Ask Your Pharmacist Week, and is being supported by the Queensland *Know Your Numbers* campaign which offers free blood pressure checks in community pharmacies.

The online **BP Tracker** system records changes in blood pressure readings over time, allowing GPs to assess patient risk and recommend strategies for lowering blood pressure.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A US woman is definitely going to have to watch her weight, after being the 75 millionth visitor to Hershey's Chocolate World in Pennsylvania.

The amusement park is in the town of Hershey - which has been created around the factory which creates America's most popular confectionery products.

Sharon O'Donnell received a prize pack valued at more than US\$1500 including a 2.5kg bar of chocolate, tickets to a number of the resort's attractions and a year's worth of Hershey products.

THE metre-long tresses of a female Chinese Kung Fu artist have been preserved for posterity after she decided to shave her head and become a Buddhist nun.

52-year-old Zhang Tingting has performed across China for many years after taking up martial arts at the age of 17.

Her recent feats include using her hair to pull six cars about 50 metres through a Beijing suburb, and she is also famous for whipping her hair through the air to cut paper.

Zhang said she was very relieved at being able to reduce spending on hair care products.

"I really always wanted to cut my hair off, but I couldn't because of the performances," she said.

"But this time I've given it up for good. It feels great."

The plait has been given to local authorities who plan to display it in a museum in her hometown of Kaifeng in Henan Province - after sending it on a pilgrimage to sacred Buddhist sites in Tibet.

TOO much alcohol has led to a drink-riding conviction for a Northern Territory man who reportedly tried to take his horse into a Tennant Creek pub.

The 33-year-old was reportedly repeatedly told by police not to ride the beast home but he ignored the warnings.

A judge last week disqualified him from driving for six months, meaning he's not allowed to ride the horse in a public place.

WIN A BOTTLE OF BIO-OIL

CONGRATULATIONS to Jaylee Osborne of Sigma Pharmaceuticals who was the first **PD** reader yesterday to tell us that Bio-Oil helps improve the appearance of old and NEW scars.

Did you know that 9 out of 10 pharmacists recommend Bio-Oil®?

Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with Bio-Oil® this week, giving readers the chance to win their very own bottle of Bio-Oil®.

Bio-Oil® is a specialist skincare product that helps improve the appearance of scars, stretch marks and uneven skin tone.

Its advanced formulation, which

contains the breakthrough ingredient, PurCellin Oil, also makes it highly effective for numerous other skin concerns, including aging skin and dehydrated skin.

Bio-Oil® is the number one selling pharmacy skin care and bodycare product in Australia.

For your chance to win a bottle of Bio-Oil®, simply send through the correct answer to the missing word/s in the sentence below:

**Bio-Oil® contains the natural plant extracts
Calendula, Lavender, ____ & ____.**

Email your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

The first correct entry received each day will win!

Hint: Visit www.bio-oil.com or see Bio-Oil® product packaging.

