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QCPP accreditation

THE Quality Care Pharmacy Program has confirmed that it's commenced the process of becoming accredited under the Joint Accreditation System for Australia and New Zealand.

A committee has been formed including representatives from the PSA, Health Department, TGA, Consumers Health Forum, the SHPA and pharmaceutical industry, to review the current standards as part of the process.

This is because a key part of the accreditation scheme is showing that the "program has been developed with the participation of technically competent representatives of interested parties, or has been subjected to formal review of such parties and subsequently revised as appropriate."

Any revisions recommended by this Standards Committee will be presented in the format of the QCPP Standards 2nd Edition.

Self-regulation slammed

PHARMACEUTICAL industry self-regulation is a "self-serving and convenient fiction promulgated by industry and government," according to a number of speakers at a Regulating Pharmaceuticals seminar held in Adelaide last night.

The Healthy Skepticism event was attended by Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mark Butler as well as Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee chairman Lloyd Sansom, with speakers incl Chris Doecke, Agnes Vitry, Peter Mansfield and Ken Harvey.

Concern was expressed about the lack of transparency of the TGA and its total dependence on industry funding, and it was argued

that the current inconsistent, ineffective and inefficient self-regulatory codes and complaint systems should be replaced by a new single system applying to all therapeutic claims and promotional activities regardless of the product.

Butler emphasised that both he and Health Minister Nicola Roxon felt that the current inconsistencies in codes and sanctions were "unacceptable" but added that their preference was to see if self-regulation could deliver the outcomes required.

Other recommendations made during the event included more independent funding of continuing medical education to reduce the perceived need for drug company supported educational activities, public funding of clinical trials and post-marketing pharmacovigilance studies, and regular reviews and updating of product information and PBS listings when new evidence arises.

A public debate also reiterated the urgent need for electronic health initiatives to help better evaluate the risk-benefit ration of new drugs in the real world.

The debate continues tonight on the ABC radio program 'The National Interest' at 6.10pm.

Claims up in smoke

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has warned that some smoking addiction therapists are making "unproven and misleading claims" about their success rates.

ACCC acting chairman Peter Kell cited some hypnotherapists including a company called Stop Smoking in One Hour which "could not substantiate advertised claims that 100% of smokers successfully give up after attending a maximum of four treatment sessions".

He also said a number of 'stop smoking' laser therapy clinics around Australia had been forced to amend their advertising after the ACCC raised concerns that the technology had proven success rates of up to 90%, was capable of completely eliminating nicotine addiction, and was effective after just an hour's treatment.

The laser therapy claims to promote the production of natural endorphins by stimulating certain points on the body, with the release of the hormones apparently helping smokers to overcome their addiction.

"After reviewing existing research on low level laser treatments and giving the clinics an opportunity to substantiate claims, the ACCC was concerned that the clinics were over-promising and misleading consumers," Kell said.

"Smokers trying to give up are entitled to accurate information about the effectiveness and reliability of the treatments available to them," he added.

PSA seeks feedback

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is urging pharmacists to respond to a questionnaire relating to professional standards, as the next version of its Professional Practice Standards is prepared for release next Jun.

PSA president Warwick Plunkett said ensuring standards are in line with contemporary practice is a major responsibility of the society on behalf of the profession.

The review will "depend greatly on input from pharmacists from all sectors," and will look at both content as well as design and presentation, with the aim of making the Standards easier to use and incorporate into everyday pharmacy practice.

The online survey will collect information about current use of the Standards as well as proposed changes - www.psa.org.au.

[Click here for questionnaire](#)

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CPD Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* Continuing Professional Development Calendar, featuring upcoming events, conferences and opportunities for pharmacists to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

28 Sep: "Last Week in an Allergy Clinic" - managing allergies in community pharmacy, Launceston General Hospital. More details 03 6231 2636.

29 Sep: Parkinson's Disease evening lecture, Lismore NSW - info 02 9431 1120.

30 Sep: PSA 'Easing the Pain of Oncology' update at Rockhampton Base Hospital - details 07 3844 4900.

05 Oct: Embracing Opiate Replacement Therapy, Monash University - 03 9389 4007.

05 Oct: Antiplatelet and Anticoagulant Therapy in Stroke Prevention, Sandy Bay Tas lorraine.norris@psa.org.au.

10-11 Oct: Stage One Accreditation Medication Management Review Workshop in Townsville - 07 4725 8915.

14 Oct: Pharmaceutical Council of WA lecture on COPD - register lgregory@pcwa.com.au.

15-18 Oct: Pharmacy Australia Congress 2009 will be held in Sydney - www.pac2009.com.au.

29-31 Oct: The Pharmacy Assistant National Conference - www.pharmacyassistants.com.

5-8 Nov: National Medicines Management Conference in Perth - www.shpamm2009.com.

12 Nov: The ASMI annual conference and agm at the Australian Technology Park in Redfern, Sydney - asmi.com.au.

16-23 Jan 2010: Pharmacy Study Tour in Aspen, Colorado - www.medi.com.au/study-tours.

4-17 Feb 2010: PSA Expedition Education conference in Chile and Patagonia. Limited to 50 people - 1300 139 293.

28 Apr-7 May 2010: The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - 1300 139 293.

MA urges level playing field

MEDICINES Australia chairman Will Delaat says a common standard of "transparency and accountability" should apply right across the therapeutics sector, with the organisation today publishing a report on hospitality provided by pharmaceutical companies over the last six months.

There were more than 16000 educational events, with a total cost of \$31.89m including \$15.65m on hospitality.

"It is important that doctors' relationships with pharmaceutical companies are based on integrity and transparency," he said.

"That is why Medicines Australia publishes these reports... There is no such transparency elsewhere in the therapeutics sector."

Delaat said companies which choose not to belong to Medicines Australia have no obligation to publish the details of their engagements with health professionals, adding that there is

"no good reason" why different standards should apply.

"There must be a consistent standard and I am encouraged that the Government has indicated its desire for a level playing field".

The chairman said doctors derive genuine professional benefit from the events, which saw companies providing them with "current, accurate and balanced information."

"These engagements are legitimate, appropriate and, in the case of Medicines Australia members, transparent," he insisted.

HIV vaccination

A STUDY undertaken by the Thai Ministry of Public Health has found that an experimental vaccination cut the risk of being infected by HIV by more than 30%.

The trial involved over 16000 participants, and it's the first time in human trials a vaccine has been found to be effective against HIV.



DISPENSARY CORNER

THEY'RE usually considered to be very much on the fringe of health care, but hairdressers could have a key role to play in mental health according to a new US report.

A survey of 40 stylists showed that they develop close relationships with clients, with most willing to refer them for help if needed.

They also see their clients regularly over many years and can tell if they're unhappy, unwell or even losing cognitive function.

The *Journal of Applied Gerontology* published the report which also found that many hairdressers were interested in having formal training in mental health to assist their clients.

YOUR taxpayer dollars at work.

A report in today's *Sydney Morning Herald* says that a new hotline operated by the NSW Health Department has attracted just six calls since being established over a month ago.

The 'mixed gender bed' phone number is a recommendation of the damning Garling enquiry which urged the abolition of mixed gender wards except in emergency and intensive care wards because they "significantly impede patient care".

The hotline is for patients to request another bed because of gender issues, and operates seven days a week from 7am to 11pm.

It was set up at a cost of \$32,000, meaning each call so far has cost taxpayers over \$5000.

IT all started in pharmacy.

Publicly listed Washington H. Soul Pattinson has joined a select club of Australian companies by yesterday reporting an annual profit of more than \$1 billion.

Now a diversified investment group, much of the bonanza was the result of the sale of the New Hope coal operation to BHP.

WHSP chairman Robert Millner said the company has about \$400m in cash and is "looking at buying other businesses".

API, which is 24.6% owned by WHSP, contributed \$3.9m.

WARNING: THIS PRIZE STINGS!

CONGRATULATIONS to Lisa Nguyen of Arana Plaza Day & Night Chemist in Queensland who was the first *Pharmacy Daily* reader yesterday to tell us that OmegaHoney is made by Natures Blend.

Nature's Blend has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week giving readers the chance to win an OmegaHoney Prize Pack each day containing:

- 1 bottle OmegaHoney 450g
- 3 Toy OmegaBees - Alpha, Lino and Ole
- The OmegaBees Activity Book
- OmegaKids Colouring Cook Book



OmegaHoney is a fun and exciting way for kids and grown-ups to get Omega-3, 6 & 9 fatty acids, with the benefits and taste of honey.

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For your chance to win this fabulous prize pack, simply be the first reader to email the correct answer to the daily question below, along with your role in pharmacy, to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

FRIDAY'S OMEGA QUESTION:

True or False? OmegaHoney is Cholesterol Free?

Sales enquiries, phone Nature's Blend on (03) 9773 0600.