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GSK childhood award

GLAXOSMITHKLINE has announced the four winners of its 2010 Childhood Immunisation Awards, with each winner being granted \$15,000 to support their program for increasing childhood immunisation in their local communities.

The winners included Health Alliance SA for a significant increase in maintenance of immunisation coverage in children 12 months to four-years old; and the Mid North Division of Rural Medicine SA, for a significant increase in maintenance of immunisation coverage in children 12 months to 4 years of age.

Other winners included Central Sydney GP Network, NSW, for a significant increase in or maintenance of immunisation coverage in hard to reach children and/or adolescent populations; and General Practice Network NT – for improved coverage and/or timely delivery of childhood or adolescent vaccines as per the Australian National Immunisation Program schedule.

Pharma recognition

STUART Giles, APHS managing director and group ceo and pharmacist has been named the regional winner if the 2010 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

Giles was selected for the award after catching the judges' attention with his leadership in repositioning the APHS at the 'forefront of specialist oncology pharmacy and medication compliance'.

He is now set to join fellow winners at a national award ceremony in Nov.

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Pharmacy election battle

THE Pharmacy Guild has ended up in the centre of a war of words between the Labor Party and the Coalition over claims about a \$1.15 billion saving in the opposition's PBS budget costings.

The Guild said that following the signing of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement, which procured savings attributable to community pharmacy of over \$1 billion, it is "entitled to be extremely concerned about any prospect of further cuts to the PBS".

Guild President Kos Sclavos said that after the Coalition released its \$1.1 billion estimate "we sought urgent clarification from the Coalition and comment from the Labor Party."

Shadow health minister Peter Dutton moved to allay the industry fears, by saying a Coalition government was not proposing any changes to either the existing Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement or the Memorandum of Understanding with Medicines Australia (see p2).

"Labor's desperate, last minute scare campaign about the PBS is simply untrue," Dutton said.

He said that the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement "is UNTOUCHED by the coalition," with the opposition estimates based on financial modelling changes to the PBS based on existing policy settings.

"Labor booked \$2.5 billion in savings over the Forward Estimates period for the PBS. We have estimated that the reforms will net savings of an extra \$1.1 billion," Dutton wrote, adding that he was "concerned that Labor's false claims will cause needless anxiety to many Australians who rely on

Supermarket vaccines

FLU vaccines are now set to be offered to paying US citizens via pharmacies in supermarket giant Safeway.

The vaccines are will be offered on a 'walk-in basis', as well as by appointment through Safeway pharmacies and 'scheduled flu vaccine clinics' at Safeway stores.

The supermarket/pharmacy giant has said that it will also offer businesses and nursing homes an off-site clinic so they can get a shot closer to where they reside/work.

medicines to improve the quality of their lives".

Dutton stressed that Coalition policy would not make changes to the PBS; would not increase the costs of pharmaceuticals to seniors; would not remove or alter current access to drugs on the PBS; would not change the price of pensioners drugs; would not change the co-contribution scheme and would not change agreements between the govt and the industry.

Meanwhile, whilst seeking to remain impartial the Guild approached Labor Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon for her take on the situation.

Roxon predictably disputed the the Coalition estimates, saying: "It is simply not possible to deliver \$1.2 billion in savings to pharmacy any other way [than to disregard the Fifth Community Agreement]."

"Only Labor will protect the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and community pharmacy by honouring the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement into the future," she insisted.

Roxon also assured the Guild that Labor is committed to maintaining the remuneration arrangements for community pharmacy in the Agreement, as well as the current model of community pharmacy, and pharmacies being independently owned and operated by pharmacists.

"We are committed to supporting the pioneering role that community pharmacy has played in developing e-health – systems that will improve safety and quality of care for consumers," she added.

The Guild said it was pleased that both sides of politics had now given explicit assurances that there will be "no revisiting of the Fifth Agreement or the MOU to extract more savings from pharmacy".

Drug test halted

ELI Lilly has called a halt to human testing of its experimental Alzheimer's drug, semagacestat after results found it could actually worsen the condition.

Designed to reduce production of amyloid-beta plaques (primary indicator of Alzheimer's), late-stage trials of the drug saw it associated with a reduced cognitive function.

Teeth under pressure

A REPORT commissioned by Oral-B and the Australian Dental Assn. has found that Australians during times of financial pressure, are highly likely to forgo a trip to the dentist in favour of spending on alcohol, cigarettes or cosmetics.

The report also found that only one in three Aussies are visiting a dentist at least once a year, and 89% of Aussies who experience red, bleeding gums don't have them seen to by a dentist.

In addition, 43% of parents with children suffering dental problems delay trips to a dentist, and 74% of Aussies with toothaches fail to have a check-up with their dentist.

"It is of grave concern that Australians are avoiding the dentist despite having serious dental health issues," said leading medico Dr Penny Adams.

"While most people cited cost as the main barrier to scheduling a routine check-up, a quarter of respondents said they only schedule visits when they have a problem.

"Yet what people fail to realise is the cost of ignoring regular dental health checks may actually cost much more long-term," she added.

Australia's kidneys

ACCORDING to the latest report released by the AIHW, chronic kidney disease (CKD) contributed to 15% of all hospitalisations in Australia between 2007-08.

Dialysis hospitalisations for Indigenous Australians were also found to be 11 times higher than other Australians, and five times higher for CKD than the latter.

In addition, hospitalisations for regular dialysis increased 60,000 per annum between 2000-01 and 2007-08 (equating to a 71% increase over this period).

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More of the green stuff

A RECENT meta-analysis study published in the British Medical Journal found that increasing daily intakes of green leafy vegetables to 1.15 servings was associated with a 14% reduction in the risk of type 2 diabetes.

A total of six studies (with a combined figure of 223,512 patients) were analysed by researchers for the report, which aimed to investigate the independent effects of intake of fruit and vegetables on incidence of type 2 diabetes.

Discussing the reasons that green leafy vegetables could be beneficial in disease prevention, researchers cited their high levels of antioxidants (including beta carotene, polyphenol and Vitamin C), as well as their linolenic acid (omega 3) levels.

Researchers said in terms of their diabetes specific benefit, the levels of magnesium may play a large part (magnesium having been recently inversely associated with type 2 diabetes).

CPD Calendar

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

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

- 11-12 Sep:** Australasian Conference for Compounding Pharmacists - www.accp.net.au.
- 23-23 Sep:** Australian Asthma & Respiratory Educators Assn Symposium, Canberra - 02 4340 8822.
- 15-18 Sep:** Pharmacy 2010, the Pharmacy Management Conference on Hamilton Island - www.pharmacyconference.com.au.
- 28-31 Oct:** PSA's Pharmacy Australia Congress in Melbourne - details www.pac10.com.au.
- 11-14 Nov:** The 36th National SHPA Conference, Medicines Management 2010 in Melbourne - mm2010shpa.com.
- 01-10 May 2011:** The PSA's 2011 Offshore Conference in Venice, Italy and Salzburg, Austria - www.psa.org.au.

Medicines agreement inquiry

THE Memorandum of Understanding between Medicines Australia and the Commonwealth Government will deliver significant benefit to taxpayers and consumers, the Senate Community Affairs Committee has heard.

Currently in the midst of an inquiry into the National Health Amendment Bill which would give effect to the savings measures in the MoU, the committee heard this week from Medicines Australia which said that savings proposed in the agreement benefited both the medicines industry and consumers.

The MoU, announced in the May budget, is set to deliver a total of \$1.86 billion worth of savings to taxpayers over five years through the reduction in the price paid by the Govt for hundreds of commonly used off-patent medicines on the PBS.

"This agreement gives pricing certainty to Australia's medicines industry," Medicines Australia chief executive Dr Brendan Shaw said.

"Importantly, it will also save the taxpayer \$1.86 billion and will mean cheaper scripts for patients.

"Hundreds of medicines commonly prescribed to treat high cholesterol, hypertension, asthma, cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis and depression will become cheaper for patients currently paying the non-concessional rate," he added.

MEANWHILE Medicines Australia also jumped on the election promise bandwagon, saying it welcomed the "Coalition's statement yesterday that it would give bipartisan support to the MoU".

"I strongly encourage all parties to work together on the resumption of Parliament to ensure the enabling legislation is enacted as quickly as possible, irrespective of who wins government," Shaw said.

Salmonella eggs

OFFICIALS from the US Centre for Disease Control have reported that a recent outbreak of salmonella in eggs may have sickened around 1,300 citizens.

So far 380 million eggs have been recalled in the US, and the FDA has said that it unsure it could have prevented the outbreak.

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Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with **Aromababy** again and is giving readers the chance to win a pregnancy pack every day this week.

Valued at \$54.90 rrp, this gorgeous duo for pregnancy & afterwards is your gift from leaders in organic mother & baby care, AROMABABY. Pure organic ingredients combine to care for the face & body throughout pregnancy, helping to minimise stretchmarks and blemishes. For more details on this pharmacy-focused brand visit www.aromababy.com



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Hint: Visit: www.aromababy.com

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Steph Wong**.



DISPENSARY CORNER

DOODLING boosts brain!

Leader of the 'Doodle Revolution', author of *Gamestorming*, Sunni Brown, has told reporters that doodling is in fact just "thinking in disguise".

"Doodling can actually be a successful multi-modal learning exercise," Brown said.

"So it's okay when a review of Romeo and Juliet in English class, for example, might get played out via a doodle in students' notes.

"The graphic, visual representation can actually help with recall and memory," he added.

Brown is also offering to provide his 'expert feedback' on doodles submitted to www.sharpieuncapped.com.

STRANGE delays caused by bros.

Older brothers may delay the onset of their younger female siblings menstrual periods, according to new University of Western Sydney research.

"What we found was that there was an older age at menarche [when a girl first gets her period] for girls who had older brothers," said researcher, Dr Debra Judge.

The study took into account responses from 273 Aussies, with findings showing females with older brothers were more likely to get their period one year later than females who were the oldest.

Researchers were unable to explain the phenomenon saying "It could be a physiological effect in terms of food or some other sort of resource, but I doubt it.

"Or it could be some sort of psychosocial process that's slowing down the girls' maturity."

DON'T disturb the bear!

Police officers in Canada's British Columbia who discovered a cache of marijuana crops were surprised to discover ten rather lax black bear guardians on duty.

Initially the officers feared for their safety during the seizure, but were pleased to learn that having been kept very well fed the bears had no problem chilling out and watching the crops disappear.