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Guild Update

This week's update from the Guild

Daily Telegraph all mixed up

Many readers, particularly in NSW, will be aware that *The Daily Telegraph* has continued its long-running campaign against community pharmacy in today's edition.

Last year, the paper ran a story asserting that pharmacies were overcharging based on some discount pharmacy chains being able to buy certain medicines significantly cheaper than the price remunerated by Government. The article was dangerously simplistic and grossly unbalanced, choosing to completely ignore that for the vast majority of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines consumers pay no more than the co-payment regardless of where they live or where they buy their medicine. These facts are in direct contradiction to the paper's repeated accusations that pharmacies are "price gouging" patients.

The Telegraph has since demonstrated an eagerness to return to the same "well" over and over again, using this questionable fact in subsequent stories. In today's article, the *Telegraph* has claimed – with little regard to logic or reason – that allowing doctors to own and operate pharmacies in their surgeries (which they often do not even own themselves) would help bring down the price of generic medicines.

The story is driven by a call from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) to let doctors own pharmacies, which looks largely like "tit-for-tat" following a Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) proposal to extend limited prescribing powers to pharmacists.

The importance of maintaining a level of separation between prescribing and dispensing is well-established, so it is surprising to see the AMA pushing this line.

In the same edition, the *Telegraph* ran a front page story saying doctors were "Dosed up on donations" from drug companies and questioned their independence. Talk about mixing your messages.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Doctors push for pharmacy

THE Australian Medical Association is calling for the govt to lift the current restrictions on pharmacy location and ownership to allow doctors to both own and operate pharmacies within or adjacent to their general practices.

This co-location, the AMA argues, would provide a more cohesive level of integrated patient care.

"Incorporating pharmacy services into general practice would improve patient care by allowing GPs to lead a team of co-located health professionals, including pharmacists and general practice nurses, in providing multidisciplinary health care to patients at the local community level," said AMA president, Andrew Pesce.

"Patients would be seen by the right health professional, at the right time, for the right treatment and health care advice," he added.

The AMA said the "integrated working relationship" between doctors and on-site or adjacent pharmacists would also improve medication management.

Pesce said he believed the plan

Cambodia crackdown

AUTHORITIES in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, have ordered a review of the status of all pharmacies across the city, with up to 20% of them not correctly registered.

The *Cambodia Daily* quoted World Health Organization officials saying that about 2.5% of all medicine sold in Cambodia is counterfeit, with "thousands of unlawful medicine outlets".

Rather than forcing the closure of the illicit pharmacies, authorities plan to bring them into a licensing regime through training, quality control and regulation.

FDA reviews MS drug

THE US Food and Drug Administration has granted a priority review of Novartis' new daily multiple sclerosis tablet, Fingolimod.

The move will fast track the review time from ten months to six, because according to the FDA, Fingolimod could potentially fill an unmet need in an area with inadequate available treatments.

The FDA granted the sped-up review on the back of a phase III study which found that the drug had significant efficacy in reducing MS relapse and slowing progression.

would also be an "attractive option for individual pharmacists, especially younger pharmacists setting out on their careers".

The Guild has responded to the AMA call, rejecting it as a "backward and dangerous step.

"Far from being a 'positive health reform for patients', the AMA's proposal is a transparent power grab which would breach the important distinctions between prescribing and dispensing medicines," the Guild said.

Guild president Kos Sclavos said the accessibility of Australia's 5000 pharmacies, without appointments or Medicare fees, led to "a service level that will never be achieved under the AMA.

The story has been picked up by NSW tabloid *The Daily Telegraph*, which is continuing its longstanding campaign against pharmacy.

Interestingly, an online poll being conducted by the *Telegraph* today asks readers to vote on whether doctors should be allowed to own pharmacies, with an overwhelming majority (80%) of respondents voting NO as PD went to press.

Three pages today

TODAY'S *Pharmacy Daily* has two pages of news, plus a full page promoting a way that "independent pharmacies can beat the discounters without lowering prices".

Details on **page three**.

US reform plan

US president Barack Obama has released the fine detail of proposed healthcare reforms, in the lead-up to a major health summit this week.

The US National Community Pharmacists Association has responded to the report, saying it supports a number of measures including changes to price reimbursement formulas for generic drugs, an expansion of medication therapy management programs and an exemption for most pharmacies from accreditation requirements for sales of diabetes testing supplies and related goods.

The huge overhaul of the US health system aims to extend healthcare insurance coverage to many of the 46 million Americans currently without insurance, and also require companies to cover people with pre-existing medical conditions.

WIN A LIFT LIP GLOSS



CONGRATULATIONS to Amanda Elliott of Apotex who was the first reader yesterday to tell us that the Marine Filling Spheres smooth, plump and hydrate.

Total Beauty Network has teamed up with *Pharmacy Daily* this week, giving readers the chance to win their very own Lip Lift Gloss.

The Lip Lift gloss is a rejuvenating anti-aging treatment that removes the lines in lips!

Demaxyl Peptides and Natural Organic Oils ensure that your lips are visibly smoother, moisturised and full.

There are two new collections offering luxurious creamy gloss with delicious Amaretto and Coffee Aroma or Exotic Sorbet Flavours.

Each Lip Lift gloss comes in a gorgeous, oversized vial with self-applicator brush and mega doses of Vitamin E.

For a chance to win a Lip Lift Gloss, simply send through the correct answer to the following question below:

What two ingredients are NOT included?

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

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint! Visit the Total Beauty Network website at: www.tbn.com.au.

Dementia funding

ALZHEIMER'S Australia has called on the government to place dementia in the forefront of its health reform agenda.

"It's now time to take action on the number of new cases of dementia in the future," said Alzheimer's Australia ceo, Glenn Rees.

In order to tackle the upcoming dementia epidemic, spurred on by the increase in Australia's ageing population, Alzheimer's Australia has proposed a two pronged attack, including increased research investment into the cause and prevention of dementia, as well as a campaign to educate the public on ways of reducing the risk of getting dementia.

"An approach is needed that both provides support for people currently living with dementia and reduces the projected number of people with dementia," Rees said.

As part of its 2010 budget submission, Alzheimer's Australia has proposed \$1 billion be made available over five years, in addition to the current \$120m annual spend, to be directed into dementia prevention, treatment, patient-care and education projects.

APESMA slams Guild again

THE Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia has reiterated its opposition to the 15c taxpayer subsidy for electronic prescriptions negotiated by the Pharmacy Guild as part of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (**PD** 08 Feb).

APESMA claims the Guild has "negotiated funding for a system from which it will benefit greatly," with eRx Script Exchange, a project of Fred IT Group Pty Ltd that is 50% owned by the Guild, "likely to be the major beneficiary" of the government funding.

The Guild has argued that the 15c per script funding will apply to any provider, but Geoff March, president of the pharmacist division of APESMA insists that there is still a "conflict of interest".

He said the union "supports the development of a comprehensive e-health initiative which enables pharmacists and doctors to share important patient information.

"The current initiative does not meet this test," he claimed.

A statement from March also aired a number of other allegations about the 5CPA negotiations, asking why the Guild is persisting

with a dispensing model of practice "when the profession is hungry and ready for more professional services to be delivered to patients."

APESMA also alleged that the Guild had done a deal "to keep the location rules intact, in exchange for a freeze on dispensing fees," and asked "why have they renamed and bundled old programs together and not pushed for new professional services to be funded."

Heart paracetamol

PARACETAMOL may help to reduce the risk of heart disease, according to researchers at the Heart Research Institute and the University of Sydney.

Findings from the study have shown that paracetamol can prevent the myeloperoxidase enzyme from producing hypochlorous acid, which is responsible for causing tissue damage.

Hypochlorous acid levels are also used as a key tool when determining a patient's potential risk for future heart disease.

"To prevent the onset or progression of the disease, the idea would be for doctors to prescribe paracetamol to patients who are in high risk categories, display early signs of developing, or may have high myeloperoxidase levels," said research leader, professor Michael Davies.

Davis has however warned against self medicating patients, saying that to get the benefits they would have to adhere to a properly tested medication regime.

Keep taking Avandia

THE US FDA has advised patients to continue using their diabetes medication Avandia (**PD** yesterday).

Refusing to be pulled into speculation regarding the heart attack risk posed by Avandia as reported by scientists in the Lancet Journal, the FDA has said that "it is time for a thorough evaluation of all [Avandia's] cardiovascular risks".

"We are neither accepting nor rejecting [Lancet's] conclusion," said Janet Woodcock, director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

"We have to go over that study with a fine-toothed comb," Woodcock added.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

A BRITISH snack food manufacturer has invented a new healthy alternative to fried potato chips - a 'slimming crisp' made out of meat.

Cranwick Limited has applied for a patent for the process, with ceo Bernard Hoggarth saying: "instead of snacking on a beef-flavoured crisp, which is deep-fried in oil, I'd rather have a piece of actual beef."

He said the company envisages selling the meat crisps in 'Pringle-style' tubes, with the product having about half the fat content and less salt than potato chips.

"JUST sing, sing a song".

A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Diego this week shows that stroke victims can be taught to sing, even if their condition has left them struck dumb.

An ongoing clinical trial being undertaken by researchers at Harvard Medical School has shown the brain responding to "melodic intonation therapy" because even if a person's speech centre is damaged by a stroke, they can learn to use their "singing centre" instead.

The scientists said the study showed that singing helped to "rewire" the patient's brains.

THIS is why you really need to take a lunch break - and perhaps have a bit of a snooze too.

Researchers have found that an early afternoon "power nap" can significantly improve brain function, because it allows your memory to become less cluttered.

Professor Matthew Walker of the University of California, Berkeley, said the findings of a study of the learning abilities of 39 student subjects suggested that sleep clears the brain's short term memory and thus makes more room for new facts.

"It's as though the email inbox in your hippocampus is full and, until you sleep and clear out those fact emails, you're not going to receive any more email," he said.



Customer Support Consultant (Pharmacy Software)

Corum Group (ASX Code:COO) is a leading provider of pharmacy software covering dispensing, point of sale and head office.

We are seeking Customer Support Consultants to assist pharmacies with phone queries relating to the use and implementation of Corum Health's pharmacy software. This role will suit someone with experience in pharmacy, who wants a career shift in an exciting industry.

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How Independent Pharmacies Can Beat The Discounters *Without* Lowering Prices

Special, Melbourne: A new special report for the independent pharmacist is now available, titled “How to Beat The Discounters Without Lowering Prices”.

This highly informative and easy-to-read special report is unlike anything ever published in the industry. Within its pages are profit building ideas and little known strategies proven to work for you, the independent. Strategies you can use to compete against the discounters *without* lowering prices. And it's available FREE for a limited time.

Here's what you'll discover:

- **How to pick up \$6 for every \$1 in gross profit.** Highly successful pharmacist reveals how he did it.
- **How a little known country pharmacy doubled and redoubled its dying script business.** The easiest way to boost profits in your dispensary.
- **How to “lock in” your script business so your best customers keep coming back to you, and refer their friends.** A simple idea that takes only minutes to implement.
- **The secret that forces your staff to give excellent customer service, every time.** Once you know this, your staff “pounces” on all your customers in less than 60 seconds.

- **How to create the illusion your prices are as low as the discounters** (even though you are priced higher on almost your entire range).
- **How to (at least) double the response of your Yellow Pages ad** by overcoming the single biggest Yellow Pages mistake you can make.

You'll also discover the simple 4-step secret to bringing in over \$30,000 turnover in as little as four hours. You'll even hear a surprising confession from the Managing Partner of Chemist Warehouse on how to beat the discounters!

In your special report you'll even find out a little known secret an independent in South Australia uses to compete with discount pharmacies on price – and win. And you'll also discover “contractual fine print” buying groups don't want you to know.

All this – and more – is revealed in your FREE special report **“How to Beat The Discounters Without Lowering Prices”**.

HOW AN INDEPENDENT ADDED \$570,000 TO THE VALUE OF HIS BUSINESS

You'll hear how an independent retired and became part owner in 7 pharmacies – without any of the management headaches (he now lives in a beautiful oceanfront home in Perth). You'll also hear how he added an extra \$140,000 in profit... and \$570,000 to the value of his business in 36 months.

You'll also find out:

- The *easiest* way to save thousands on your generics.
- The *easiest* way to reduce stock on hand and free up much needed cash flow.
- The *easiest* way to fully reap the benefits provided to you through generic dispensing.
- The *easiest* way to save up to 7 hours per week negotiating with sales reps.
- The *easiest* way to integrate Best Practice retail strategies at store level.
- And finally...the *easiest* way to boost the value of your pharmacy by as much as \$200,000.

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