

## e-health key to reform

THE implementation of a national e-health system is 'crucial' for the progression and success of the Government's health reform agenda, according to the Australian General Practice Network's newly released Budget submission.

"The system will improve communication between GPs and specialists and enable patients to better manage their health care," said AGPN chairperson, Dr Emil Djakic.

The AGPN also called for a nationally consistent approach to eHealth, arguing that the 'varying levels of eHealth literacy' pose a barrier to the health reform's success.

"General Practice is highly computerised, but other sectors lag behind," Djakic said.

"The eHealth agenda set up by the government will require accurate and quality data which general practice and their colleagues will need help support to deliver," he added.

## Bowel test confusion reigns

ENTERIX Australia, which manufactures a bowel screening test sold through pharmacies has been inundated with enquiries from concerned members of the public after a channel 7 story inaccurately screened footage of the product on the *Sunrise* show today, in connection with the government's bowel screening debacle.

The general manager of Enterix, Judy Readman, said the "incorrect vision" had caused considerable alarm among doctors, pharmacists and patients who had recommended or used the InSure screening test.

The confusion follows the recall of thousands of kits issued by the government in the first round of the National Bowel Cancer Initiative (PD 12 May 09).

The govt test kits, which were supplied by Dorevitch Pathology and made by Japanese firm Fujirebio Diagnostics, were found to be possibly adversely affected by Australian temperatures and thousands were recalled.

Now the reissued government test kits have resulted in possible positive results for more than 4000

patients who previously were given the all-clear..

Although only around 5% of those who return positive results are found to have cancer, the delay in diagnosis caused by the initial false negative results could mean the difference between catching the in its early stages when it is contained to the bowel, and finding it when it has already metastasised to other organs.

President of the Gut Foundation, Terry Bolin said sitting on a precursor to cancer for the year between first taking the faulty test and retaking the replacement test, could be the determining factor on whether patients would be treatable or not.

Bolin has urged those that returned positive results to 'hurry off' to the doctor for "a colonoscopy as quickly as possible". Enterix said that in contrast to the initial kits issued by the government its InSure test "has been proven to be a very effective screening test."

It's the second time that Enterix has been embroiled in the drama, with the same footage used by channel 7 last May when the initial recall was announced (PD 13 May).

## Medication masterclass

JULIE Green, project leader at the Institute for Safe Medication Practices in Canada is slated to host a Medication Masterclass on 08 March at the Amora Jamison Hotel in Sydney.

The Masterclass will cover 'Medication reconciliation in Canada - what's been learnt' as well as 'Facilitating the implementation of medication reconciliation across the system (including identification and discussion of barriers)'.

Cost of attendance is \$330, and for further details or to register see [www.changechampions.com.au](http://www.changechampions.com.au).

## Bellaboo phone change

BELLABOO says that for anyone wanting more information or to order its range of teenage skin care products (PD yesterday) its stockist phone number has changed.

The new number for any Bellaboo enquiries is 02 9816 1491.

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## Travel Specials

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.

**STAR CLIPPERS** has discounted its 20 March 13-night Phuket (Thailand) to Goa (India) luxury tall ship voyage to start from just \$2325 per person including the cruise, all meals and onboard entertainment as well as port fees and taxes.

Guests aboard the 13-night voyage will enjoy a stop off at one of the world's best diving and snorkeling spots, located just off of a pristine marine national park island in the Andaman Sea's Similan group, before sailing to bustling Colombo and on to Goa.

For more info call 1300 362 599.

**VALUE TOURS** has released a range of early-bird seven-night self drive NZ ski packages for travel between Jun and Oct, starting from

just \$998 per person, including return Sydney to Christchurch flights, seven nights accom at the Rydges Lakeland Resort Hotel, seven day car hire with unlimited kilometres, a three day Coronet Peak and Remarkables lift-pass, a day Cardrona lift-pass plus a night skiing session at Coronet Peak.

The deal is valid for sale until 30 April- for info call 1300 361 322.

**BENCH INTERNATIONAL** is offering a 16-day rail safari from Johannesburg to Cape Town or Johannesburg to Victoria Falls departing on 17 Mar and 28 Apr, from \$6070pp incl accom, brekkie, dinner, transfers, daily sightseeing and a visit to Kruger National Park. Call 1800 221 451.

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## NPS to drop TAIS

THE National Prescribing Service has confirmed the demise of the Therapeutic Advice and Information Service (TAIS) at the end of the financial year.

The service provides information on new medications and side effects as well as drug interactions, with community pharmacists reportedly making about 44% of the 6000 calls per year.

NPS ceo Lynn Weekes said that the government has declined to fund an expanded drug information service, and in the light of this the NPS board "believes that the current service is not sustainable given its total cost, inability to grow and limited reach."

She said the PSA and the Guild had been invited to give their feedback on what the end of the TAIS may mean, and what possible alternative information sources could be developed.

## Erbix indication approved

THE Australian Drug Evaluation Committee has released details of new approvals decided in its last meeting, including additional indications for Merck Serono's cancer drug Erbix (etuximab).

The new approval allows the use of Erbix for the targeted treatment of patients with epidermal growth factor receptor-expressing K-RAS wild-type metastatic colorectal cancer, in combination with chemotherapy and as a single agent in patients who have failed or are intolerant to some other therapies.

Other recommendations include:

- AstraZeneca's Seroquel for the treatment of schizophrenia in patients between 13-17 years as well as its Seroquel XR therapy for the treatment of generalised anxiety disorder in adults
- An extension of the indication for

Actelion Pharmaceuticals Zavesca (miglustat) for the treatment of Niemann-Pick disease

- Berinert (C1 esterase inhibitor) for acute attacks in patients with hereditary angioedema
- Cayston (aztreonam lysine) powder for use in cystic fibrosis
- Novartis' fixed dose combination of aliskiren hemifumarate and hydrochlorothiazide (Enviage HCT/ Rasilez HCT) tablets for the treatment of hypertension
- Boehringer Ingelheim's Micardis/Pritor (telmisartan) tablet for the prevention of cardiovascular events in patients over 55 years
- Bristol-Myers Squibb's Orencia (abatacept) 250mg powder for children aged 6+ suffering moderate to severe polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis
- Roche's Avastin (bevacizumab) for the treatment of Grade IV glioma with relapse or disease progression, and its Mabthera (rituximab) injection for tCD20 positive lymphocytic leukemia
- An increase in the dosage recommendations for Novartis' Glivec (imatinib at mesylate) for leukemia to 340mg/m<sup>2</sup> per day
- Beripren P/N (human prothrombin complex) powder for injection for the treatment and prophylaxis of bleedings
- New dosing regimes for Pfizer's Genotropin/Genotropin Miniq (somatropin) for hormone deficiency
- Onglyza (saxagliptin hydrochloride) 5mg tablet for the treatment of patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus,
- Azarga (brinzolamide and timolol) eye drops for decreasing intraocular pressure
- Galvus/Xiliarx (vildagliptin) 50mg tablet for the treatment of type 2 diabetes.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

TEACHER'S pets may in fact be their gut's best buddy also.

Danish researchers have discovered that apples create friendly gut bacteria, and may be beneficial for digestive health.

The scientists also posited that an apple a day may in fact help keep cancer at bay.

THE latest fitness fad in the USA is Mall Walking - also known as traipsing around a shopping centre to get a bit of exercise.

The trend is highlighted in a new book titled *Mall Walking Madness: Everything You Need to Know to Lose Weight and Have Fun at the Same Time*.

Author Sara Donovan said mall walking isn't just for senior citizens, with "a big contingent of stroller moms...and parents who have home-schooled their kids and mall walk as part of the kids' physical education."

A number of shopping centres operate special mall walking programs, with annual membership fees entitling them to monthly breakfasts, retail discounts and health lectures.

GRANDMA, Grandpa - out of the Smoky Dawson recliner, push the plush slippers away, dust off your sneakers and hit the gym!

New research by the scientists at Canada's University of British Columbia has found a correlation in improved cognitive function in those aged between 65-75 years and lifting weights.

In light of the discovery researchers are now urging pensioners to 'pump iron' to help avoid Alzheimer's disease.

EATING pork can help improve your sex life, according to Argentina's president Cristina Fernandez.

"It's a lot nicer to eat a bit of grilled pork than take Viagra," she said, claiming her husband responds well to the "other white meat"

Apparently she made the reference during a speech to a group of pig farmers.

## WIN A POUCHIE™



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