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Pharmacy referrals

THE US Pharmacy Board of Washington State has begun the process of drafting rules which would require pharmacists who cannot fill particular prescriptions to actively refer patients to a pharmacy that can.

Currently in Washington State, pharmacists are not required to stock specific medications other than one which induces vomiting.

In explaining its decision, the Board said that there is a great need to implement pharmacist referrals, particularly in the case of time-sensitive (and occasionally controversial) medications.

The new rules, currently in the works would require pharmacists to enact a "facilitated referral" for patients whose prescriptions they cannot fill, meaning that they would have to actively seek and locate a pharmacy that could fill the prescription.

"The board is trying to find a way for people who have valid prescriptions to have quick, unblocked, easy access: If you don't have it in stock, you help the person out," said Health Department spokesperson, Donn Moyer.

Stronger self-regulation?

THE Federal Government has today released a proposal paper calling for stronger self-regulation by the pharmaceutical and therapeutic industries in relation to their promotional activities directed at healthcare professionals.

"Doctors and other health professionals should prescribe drugs or medical devices because of the benefit to their patients, not because they could receive an incentive or a gift," said Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mark Butler.

As part of its position, the Government is calling on all members of the therapeutic goods industry to band together to develop stronger standards and enforcement for the promotion of medicines and devices to healthcare professionals.

"If the industry cannot provide the tough self-regulation that consumers deserve, the Government will have to bring in legislation," Butler said.

Butler also hinted that if "consistent arrangements" were not realised in the near future, then legislative options could be

put in place as early as 2012.

The paper itself, stipulates that the current range of promotional codes, existent across a number of the therapeutic goods industry associations are "inconsistent in terms of their requirements, application, enforcement and penalties" and have the potential to undermine public confidence in the public sector.

The paper also argues that current self-regulation codes have "created an uneven playing field" within the therapeutic goods industry.

As such, it is argued that the industry needs to strengthen and standardise self-regulation through the development of an industry-wide framework based on a "common set of high principals".

Suggested principals include: common core standards; principles of conduct including specific elements required for each code; and governance arrangements such as compliance training, reporting and independent complaint mechanisms.

"The application process for the registration of these products on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods would provide an opportunity for sponsors to nominate the code with which they intended to comply," the paper said.

The Government has also said that in order for the proposed code to be effective, "there is a need to ensure the standards for conduct of healthcare professionals align with the standards expected of the therapeutic goods industry".

The consultation paper on advertising is now open for comment until 27 Aug - for info see www.tga.gov.au.

New national standard

TODAY marks the commencement of Australia's new National Registration and Accreditation Scheme which sees pharmacy regulated by nationally consistent legislation, under the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

As such, the new regulations covering CPD points, the Regency of Practice Standard, supervised practice, preceptor requirements, professional indemnity insurance, criminal history and the English Language Skills Standard are now in effect.

As of today, all State and Territory Board functions have now also transferred to the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

For more information see www.pharmacyboard.gov.au.

Pre- PAC10 sessions

DETAILS have emerged regarding pre- Pharmacy Australia Congress 2010 session line-ups, designed to complement PAC10's theme of 'Star Performance - the future of pharmacy'.

Pre-congress sessions are set to include the Military Pharmacists Special Interest Group meeting, a Pharmacy in Health forum, Pharmacy Practice in Government meeting and a workshop on mandatory CPD.

The pre-PAC10 session will also see the return of the popular all-day AACCP Consultant Pharmacists' Forum.

For info see www.pac10.com.au.

Hydroxycut update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has revealed its investigation into claims made that Hydroxycut Hardcore products in Australia causing liver toxicity, may in fact relate to products sourced overseas.

The TGA has discovered that the claims, made in Feb this year, may relate to a case of liver toxicity in Jun 08, when no Hydroxycut products were registered on the ARTG.

As such, the TGA has surmised that "the product involved was most likely sourced from outside Australia".

According to the TGA, Australian Hydroxycut products which have a different formulation to their overseas counterparts, are recognisable by their 'AUST L' number on the front of the carton.

WIN A MILKY FOOT PACK

Have you tried the easiest way to exfoliate your feet yet?



Each day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a pack of **Milky Foot** - Australia's easiest way to exfoliate your feet - no effort required!

Valued at \$29.95 for a regular size (or \$34.95 for a large), this innovative product from Japan is truly the easiest way to rid yourself of hardened, dead and tough skin including tough heels and calluses. All you have to do is pop on the Milky Foot pads for 60-90 minutes and 3-4 days after the

treatment, all your hardened skin will just peel away naturally. What's more it costs less than a salon pedicure! So if you want to get milky soft feet the easy way, try Milky Foot!

To enter today, simply send your answer to the following question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What happens 3-4 days after a Milky Foot treatment?

The first correct entry received each day wins
Hint! Visit www.milkyfoot.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Michelle Hyatt** from **Apotex**. The correct answer was: 60-90 minutes.



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Novartis' set to lead

MARKET analysts at Datamonitor have forecast that Novartis will deliver the strongest prescription drug sales growth of all Big Pharma's for the period 2009 - 2015.

The prediction, based on its annual "organic performance", foresees that the company will have an annual growth rate of 4% which would result in around \$10 billion in sales.

Conversely, Datamonitor analysts have forecast an average annual growth rate for Big Pharma in general of 1.4%.

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.

NEW Zealand's brand new **Te Waonui Forest Retreat**, located on the west coast of the South Island, is offering guests free passage to the Glacier Hot Pools when staying for two consecutive nights.

The Resort is also offering a free bottle of sparkling wine and canapes on arrival for guests staying one or more nights.

Resort prices start at NZ\$575 per room per night including dinner, bed and brekkie for two.

The offer is valid until 31 Aug - see www.tewaonui.co.nz.

FOR something closer to home, the **Mantra Ettalong Beach** is offering a stay four, pay three offer, priced from \$189 per room per night staying in a two bedroom spa suite with hinterland views - www.visitcentralcoast.com.au.

ADVENTURE **World's** Cruise West Alaska Earlybird offers include US\$700 off its five-day 'Glacier Bay Highlights' voyage, which is now priced from US\$1,399pp.

For details call 1300 295 049.

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NPS launches its new look

TODAY marks the end of an era as the National Prescribing Service officially changes its name to 'NPS - better choices, better health' and shifts its focus beyond solely prescription medicines to address all medicines and the "quality use of medical tests".

"The National Prescribing Service is no longer a broad enough descriptor for what we do," said NPS ceo, Karen Kaye.

With the objective of becoming a household name by 2018, the NPS' new mandate also aims to see every Australian become "medicinewise".

"This fresh new look, and consistent branding across all our products and services will help us get there," she added.

The kick-off of the new financial year has also seen an evolution of the NPS' phone services with the commencement of its collaboration with the National Healthcare Call Centre Network for its consumer phone info service, 'Medicines Line'.

The new management structure means that the Medicine Line's

number has changed to 1300 633 424, and all medicines related calls will now be answered initially by a Healthdirect Australia nurse and triaged under new protocols, with more complex calls to be referred to the caller's own doctor or community pharmacist.

The NPS will also operate its own in-house pharmacist phone service with the capacity to answer 10,000 calls per annum, referred by Healthcare Australia.

"This new delivery model offers consumers greater access to information about their medicines, and by offering the NPS in-house service we will ensure consumers continue to have access to a service that can answer more complex questions," Kaye said.

"Importantly, it will also allow us to capture data about medicines issues to better inform our quality use of medicines programs."

The NPS has however reassured the industry by saying it will not be making any changes to its current Adverse Medicines line.

CSU pharmacy students give back



TWO Bachelor of Pharmacy students, Lauren Slater and Clare Smith, from Charles Sturt University were recently granted the opportunity to spend nine weeks on Elcho Island, living and working with the Indigenous community of Galiwin'ku as part of a team of doctors, nurses and PhD students run by the Menzies School of Health and Research.

The aim of Menzies' two-year project is to ultimately treat and eradicate skin mites (scabies) and intestinal worms (strongyloides stercoralis) from the community.

Both Slater and Smith spent their time on the Island working with the community as part of the team's

mass drug administration and screening program.

"It was definitely challenging at times but the skills and knowledge we gained from our time in Galiwin'ku has made it worthwhile and something I will never forget," said Slater.

CSU's Professor of Remote and Rural Pharmacy commended his students efforts adding that the program "has been an important opportunity for our students to work closely with remote Indigenous communities".

Pictured above is (**from left**) Lauren Slater, Clare Smith and Elcho Island resident, Leanne Bundhala Durrkay.



DISPENSARY CORNER

SCIENTISTS find real killer whale!

A 12-million year old whale fossil has been found recently in Peru, which after early analysis seems to indicate that it was more of a sea-monster than its present day descendants.

According to scientists at the Paris Natural History Museum the 17-metre whale, named 'Leviathan melvillei' (in an ode to Moby Dick) would have fed off prey up to 8m long.

"It was a kind of a sea monster," said the Paris Natural History Museum's director, Christian de Muizon.

"And it's interesting to note that at the same time in the same waters was another monster, which was a giant shark about 15m long.

"It's possible that they might have fought each other," he added.

SPIDERMAN is a boy named Hibiki!

A 13-year old UK highschooler Hibiki Kono has taken his love of Spiderman comics to the next level, converting two cheap vacuum cleaners into his very own Spider wall climbing apparatus.

It took Hibiki a total of five months to design and build the machine out of two £14.98 vacuum cleaners during his Design & Technology classes, but his devotion paid off when he was able to surprise friends by climbing his school wall during the morning's assembly.

"I'm hugely proud of him," Hibiki's D&T teacher, Angus Gent said.

"When he came to me with the idea at the beginning I had my doubts, but once he proved it could be done I encouraged him," he added.



The new Spiderman scales the wall