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PBS access for nurses

YESTERDAY the Senate passed new legislation which gives nurse practitioners access to the Medical Benefits Scheme and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Nurse practitioner services range from enhanced chronic disease management, women's health, prevention, health assessments, triage and minor illness or injury management.

The passing of the new legislation means that prescription and pathology requests ordered by nurse practitioners will now attract a patient rebate, and also that patients are now be able to claim a rebate for a NP consultation.

The Australian Practice Nurses Association has welcomed the move saying "the fact that nurse practitioners in Australia have not been able to assist their patients to their full scope of practice outside the hospital setting because of funding and pharmaceutical subsidy restrictions, has been a nonsense".

It is now expected that because of the new legislation there will be an influx of nurses taking up the training to become a practitioner.

ASMI minor ailments push

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry has today renewed calls for the government to address GP shortages by allowing pharmacists to treat minor ailments.

ASMI was responding to a major funding boost for GP training places announced yesterday by the Government, with outgoing ASMI executive director Juliet Seifert saying this wouldn't see more doctors available for some years.

"The GP shortage could be addressed in a more timely way through a program that encourages patients with minor ailments to visit their pharmacist as a first port of call," she said.

Both the PSA and the Guild have backed the call, with PSA President Warwick Plunkett saying the treatment of minor ailments in pharmacies "provides better health outcomes for patients and frees up GP's time to treat more serious illnesses and complaints.

"Pharmacists have the expertise and accessibility to treat minor ailments and are highly trained so they know when a patient should be

referred to their doctor," he said.

Guild President Kos Sclavos said "at a time when the Government is intent on getting maximum value for the dollars taxpayers put into the health system, it makes sense to utilise the skills and knowledge of Australia's most accessible health professionals in 5000 community pharmacies."

ASMI claimed Medicare treatment by GPs of minor ailments resulted in \$260 million in 'waste and resource misallocation', with a program of self care in pharmacies able to make "serious inroads into the current shortage of GPs across the country."

MEANWHILE the PSA said that other professions need support as well, in the light of the substantial boost in GP training places.

"Other professions, like pharmacy which are similarly pivotal to the primary health-care team must not be forgotten," Plunkett said.

APESMA slams Guild

EMPLOYEE pharmacist union APESMA has slammed the Guild's upcoming 'Roadmap' release (**PD Fri**) saying that given the Guild's work with the Fifth Community Agreement, the document will be "a road to nowhere".

APESMA criticised the Guild's "ham-fisted" work with the Agreement, citing the "stripping" of \$1 billion from community pharmacies and reiterating its previous claims about securing taxpayer funds to fund the partially owned eRx prescription service, adding that the Guild's desire to 'control' the future direction of pharmacy would be disastrous.

"Through blinkered leadership, we have lost opportunity after opportunity to diversify this income base over the years, and this year it is no exception," a statement issued overnight said.

APESMA called on the Guild to "take a deep breath, admit it hasn't got all the answers" and join with other representatives of the profession "to develop a truly integrated, responsive and sustainable pharmacy blueprint."

"We really have this one chance to bring in change for the next generation of pharmacists," said APESMA pharmacy division president, Geoff March.

TB travesty

THE launch of World Tuberculosis Day has coincided with renewed calls from industry leaders for industry and government to do more to curb the rise of TB in the Asia Pacific region.

According to the statistics quoted at today's World TB Day launch in Canberra, if Australia suffered the same TB rates as Timor, there would be 75,000 active cases and 9,400 deaths annually.

Vote for your charity

MEDTRONIC Australia is giving away \$20,000 to charity - but is determining the split between the Royal Flying Doctors and Mercy Care based on a public vote.

Each vote at the online site www.medtronicgiving.com.au will see \$1 of the total \$20,000 pool given to the nominated charity.

Walgreens ultimatum

US pharmacy giant Walgreens has announced that it won't fill any more brand-name prescriptions for patients covered by the Washington state Medicaid program.

The company said it was responding to reimbursement cuts, which meant that almost 95% of brand name medications dispensed to Medicaid patients were done at below cost.

Walgreens operates 121 pharmacies in Washington state.

FDA cracks down

THE US Food and Drug Administration has ordered Glenmark Generics and Konec Inc to cease marketing and distribution of unapproved nitroglycerin tablets.

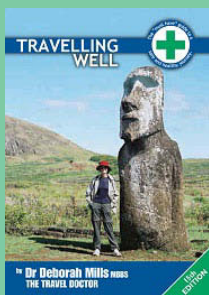
The 0.3mg, 0.4mg and 0.6mg tablets are designed to be dissolved under the tongue for the relief of chest pain and the prevention of heart attack, but have not, as yet, been deemed safe and effective.

The move comes as part of the agency's crack down on unapproved drugs, and Glenmark and Konec now have 90 days to cease manufacture and 180 days to stop shipping.

Patients are being advised to continue taking the medication until they consult their doctor.

An alternate sublingual nitroglycerin tablet is available from Pfizer in the same dosages.

Win a copy of Travelling Well!



Dr Deb is back again by popular demand, and **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a copy of her latest book, *Travelling Well*, valued at \$24.95 each day this week.

The book is a must have guide to a safe and healthy journey, with detailed advice about pre-trip preparation, how to look after yourself while away, and what to do if you get sick.

Dr Deb, known as "The Travel Doctor" is one of Australia's leading travel health care providers, and has over 20 years experience in the field.

The 15th edition of *Travelling Well* has been updated to include new vaccines, current recommendations for treatment of travellers' diarrhoea and much more - see www.travellingwell.com.au.

For your chance to win a copy of Travelling Well, simply tell us what item you would pack in a Travellers' Medical Kit and why?

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

The lucky book winners will be announced in the *Pharmacy Daily* issue next Monday.

One of yesterday's entries came from Belinda Morris from AFS Dispensaries, who wrote: *I would take a pair of sharp tweezers. Not only are they useful for removing splinters or large debris from wounds, etc. but they are also handy for keeping those eyebrows looking great no matter where you are.*



Health, Beauty and New Products

Welcome to our weekly feature with all the latest health, beauty and new products for pharmacy!

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au.



DISPENSARY CORNER

HOW about this as a way of getting to know someone?

A British soldier has become the first person in the world to be able to see with his tongue - but don't worry, he doesn't recognise his friends by licking them.

After having been rendered blind following combat in Basra in 2007, the British army selected Lance Corporal Craig Lundberg to trial new technology which converts images into electrical pulses of varying intensities to the tongue.

The BrianPort device takes images recorded on a camera attached to a pair of sunglasses worn by Lundberg into pulses onto his tongue via a plastic 'lollipop' - effectively allowing him to navigate, read words and make out shapes.

The technology does however require extensive training in 'reading' the signals before it is of any use whatsoever.

The successful results of the trial, it is hoped, will result in the extension and refinement of the program to allow its usage by all blind members of the British military forces.

NO wonder the glucosamine wasn't working.

A 60-year-old bullet has been found in the hip of a World War II veteran when he went to the doctor, expecting a diagnosis of arthritis after complaining about three months of joint pain.

X-rays ordered for Fred Gough found he'd been in fact carrying a little war memento from his participation in the campaign.

"It has absolutely amazed me and I was pretty shocked to say the least," Gough said.

The war vet did however remember getting the wound in 1944 on the front line.

"I can remember is getting this thump in my thigh, but it didn't knock me off my feet or anything," he said.

"It must have been a German soldier. Someone slapped a plaster on my leg and sent me back down the line," he said.

Homeopathic flu remedy



Oscilloccinum (o-sill-o-cox-see-num) is basically a homeopathic flu treatment, which is claimed to be able to reduce the duration and severity of flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, and body aches and pains by stimulating the body's own defenses. It has been in circulation for about 65 years and is now available in Australia.

According to its manufacturer Boiron, Oscilloccinum is the largest flu medication in France and the largest herbal flu medication in the

US. Not suitable for vegetarians Oscilloccinum is formulated from the livers and hearts of barberry ducks, and features inactive ingredients including sucrose and lactose. Boiron advises that Oscilloccinum be taken at the first sign of sickness.

RRP: \$16.95 (six doses)

Stockist: 1800 791 381

Cucumbers on the beach



Yes to Cucumbers' Cucumber and Aloe Body Gel is a great addition to any beach, hiking or camping bag- for its sunburn relief and healing properties. Chock full of organic aloe vera, as well as cucumber, chamomile and spinacia extract the gel cools and calms affected areas on the body. It's not recommended for use on the face, but can also be used daily as part of a general skin moisture maintenance program.

RRP: \$19.95 (6.76 fl. oz.)

Stockist: 1800 791 381

How much more black? None blacker.

Australis has released its blackest and softest ever eyeliner pencil. Perfect for blending and creating smokey looks, the 'Blackest Black' pencil glides on easily and lasts for ages. Other new pencils in Australis' range include Hello Sailor- a glowing navy blue hue and Silver Service - as the name suggests, a dark metallic silvery shimmer shade. In other eyeliner news, Australis has added another colour to its Stayput retractable waterproof pencil range, Bluebird - a seriously bright blue attention grabbing pencil!

RRP: \$8.95 (wooden pencil), \$10.95 (Stayput pencil)

Stockist: 1300 650 981



Never say die to summer!



Available in Fair to Light, Light to Medium and Medium to Dark, Physicians Formula Bronze Booster Pressed and Loose bronzing veils are formulated to create 'triple-action' bronzing. Active ingredients include ceratonia siliqua- carob tree extract, which produces the bronzed glow; kapi kacchu seeds and phospholipids to moisturise and produce long lasting bronzed effects and vitamins C and E to improve skin clarity and radiance. The powder and veil products are both lightweight and can be built up to create the desired level of bronzed glow. As an added bonus, both of the products are stain-free, streak-free, orange (colour)-free and odour-free.

RRP: \$34.95

Stockist: 02 8709 8800