

## Primary yields axe

**PRIMARY** Health is set to close the former Symbion head office in Melbourne, as part of a range of cost cutting measures which will see the full consolidation of corporate shared services across the business.

In a share market update this morning ceo Ed Bateman said that the company's GP division had seen "unusually subdued growth" in patient attendances for FY2010, but this now appears to have been reversed with a 10% increase in year on year revenue for the four months to 31 Oct.

Bateman said Primary plans to open a further two large scale medical centres by 30 Jun 2011, adding to its current 54.

Other cost cutting measures include a rationalisation of Primary's diagnostic division which will see 23 sites close (mostly in Queensland) and the loss of about 300 full time jobs.

## 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](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**11-14 Nov:** The 36th National SHPA Conference, Medicines Management 2010 in Melbourne - [mm2010shpa.com](http://mm2010shpa.com).

**16 Nov:** PSA NSW, Migraine- A Practical Approach to Pain Management, Kogarah, 02 9431 1120

**16 Nov:** PSA Tas, Opioid Therapy in Chronic Pain, Launceston, [lorraine.norris@psa.org.au](mailto:lorraine.norris@psa.org.au)

**20 Nov:** Finding Medicines Information on the Web, CSU Wagga, 02 9431 1100.

**20/21 Nov:** PSA Canberra Branch, Medicines Update Course, Canberra Business Event Centre, 02 6201 5897

**20-29 Jan 2011:** Pharmacy Study Tour, Mammoth Mountain California and Las Vegas - [www.medici.com.au/events](http://www.medici.com.au/events).

**01-10 May 2011:** The PSA's 2011 Offshore Conference in Venice, Italy and Salzburg - [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au).

## UK Health stops substitution

**THIS** week the United Kingdom Department of Health announced its decision to cease plans for the generic substitutions of medicines in primary care.

Had the plan been approved, it would have allowed pharmacists to replace branded drugs with generic substitutions, a practice which is not allowed in the UK.

"Doctors and other frontline health professionals have always based their prescribing decisions on individual assessments of their patients' clinical circumstances and will continue to do so," the Government said in a statement.

"Prescribers are free to prescribe branded or generic medicines, and nearly 85 per cent of prescriptions

written for patients are already for generic medicines," the statement added.

The decision to quash plans to all pharmacists to offer patients generic substitutions follows an extensive period of public consultation.

According to the UK Health Minister, Lord Howe, the consultation stirred up concerns from the public, patients and other "interested parties" over granting pharmacists substitution rights.

"It is also not clear whether the proposals would have provided substantial benefit to the NHS, compared to the efforts of frontline staff to implement them," he said.

"We want patients to get the drugs their doctors recommend at the best price for the taxpayer.

"Patients should be reassured that we are looking at more appropriate ways of supporting the use of generic medicines and, in the long term, value-based pricing will help to ensure we pay a price for drugs which better reflects their value," he added.

## Diabetes plan axed

**THE** Government has altered its plans for block funding of chronic diabetes care, and its Diabetes Advisory Panel will now go back to the drawingboard to develop an alternative model.

The previous plan, announced by former PM Kevin Rudd, would have seen diabetes patients register with GP practices which would then receive fixed payments to cover all of the patient's GP-related care.

Doctors strongly opposed the move, saying that the money available may not be sufficient to fund the care for patients with complex conditions.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon issued a statement today saying that the government is "confident there is ample evidence to show that consumer-centred coordinated care provides better health outcomes.

"However as a government we are always prepared to listen and respond to views put by the community," she said.

The AMA previously refused to join the advisory group, but will now join with Diabetes Australia and other representatives to help address the rising tide of diabetes.

## PSA trip popular

**THE** PSA says it's already received over 200 registrations for next year's Offshore Refresher Conference which will be held in Venice and Salzburg and offer up to 50 CPD credits.

See [psa.org.au/conference](http://psa.org.au/conference).

# APP2011

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Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre, Queensland

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The Pharmacy  
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REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!  
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## Supermarket action

**QUEENSLAND** pharmacist Dr Kelly Lash of Cane Fire Pharmacy in Wonga Beach is calling for the industry to band together against the creeping tide of supermarkets into the areas of health and beauty.

"It is quite apparent Coles and Woolies are targeting the cherished ground of health and beauty...in the recent months aggressively advertising many common pharmacy lines with prices we won't be able to compete with, buying groups or not," Lash told *PD*.

"I personally have felt the wholesalers we all deal with are like lame ducks in negotiating better acquisition prices and passing that onto pharmacies," she added.

As a result of her concerns, Lash is asking pharmacies nationwide to "start a movement or a voice" to push for more competitive pricing from the wholesalers.

"If they think they are not big enough to muscle the big players they are wrong," she said.

"We are the customer and not the shareholders, but we have a unique power by sheer number," she said.

## WIN A TRAVEL PALETTE



Every day this week, *Pharmacy Daily* is giving readers the chance to win a Travel Palette from the Perfect Presents range, courtesy of Total Beauty Network.

Designer Brands Travel Palettes are the perfect, portable make-up companion!

The mineral formulation contains skin nurturing ingredients like Aloe Vera and Vitamin E, and the long lasting formulas provide a fabulous finish every time.

Complete with the essential shades for your eyes and lips, this kit is a must-have for this Christmas.

For your chance to win, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

What are the 2 other great Perfect Presents available?

Email your answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit [www.dbcosmetics.com.au](http://www.dbcosmetics.com.au)

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: Melessa Bone from APhS Pharmacy Greenslopes.



## MA MoU bill push

**MEDICINES** Australia has reiterated its support for the National Health Amendment (PBS) Bill currently before parliament, saying it will ensure the price the Govt pays for PBS medicines reflects the price at which it is sold to pharmacists.

"If the legislation is passed, ordinary Australians will save substantially at the pharmacy counter because price cuts will lead to cheaper scripts," said Medicines Australia ce Dr Brendan Shaw.

## Alendronate extension

**THE** PBS listing for medications containing alendronate has been extended to include an indication for reducing fracture risk in patients with corticosteroid-induced osteoporosis.

The change applies to Fosamax Plus D-Cal, Fosamax Plus and Fosamax, with prolonged use of corticosteroids being the most common cause of secondary osteoporosis.

Alendronate and combination products are now PBS listed for patients taking prednisone or equivalent and doses of 7.5mg/day or more for more than 3 months - and no prior fracture is required to obtain reimbursement.

## Pain gene discovery

**RESEARCHERS** at the Austrian Academy of Sciences have uncovered a novel human pain gene, following investigations into pain genes in fruit flies.

The gene encodes part of a calcium channel and the scientists found that people who had minor variations in the 'novel human pain gene', recorded differences in susceptibility and sensitivity to heat and back pain.

Other pain genes identified in the study which could affect patient pain sensitivity included the gene encoding the potassium ion channel subunit KCNS1, as well as single nucleotide polymorphisms.

With further research, the discovery of these genes could, according to researchers, result in the development of more personalised medicines, whereby doctors could profile patients' genes and tell them how susceptible to post operative pain they may be.

## Blackmores 'down there'

**BLACKMORES** has launched a new natural health initiative, aimed at helping women understand, prevent and treat vaginal imbalances.

"Women talk about almost everything, even taboo topics, but not about vaginal health," said Blackmores director of education, Pam Stone.

"Research undertaken by Blackmores has uncovered that even the majority of women will suffer from vaginal imbalance at some stage, they don't feel comfortable talking about their symptoms, and they really dislike seeking advice in public for fear of humiliation," she added.

The initiative revolves around a 'Little Pink Book of Down There'

## Roche's Big Blue Test

**THE** Diabetes Hand Foundation has this week, launched its Big Blue Test online educational program, aimed to raise awareness of the benefits of moderate exercise for diabetes sufferers.

Coinciding with World Diabetes Day, the Big Blue Test will take place online on 14 Nov, asking diabetics to test their blood sugar, do 14 minutes of exercise, and then test their sugar again.

Last year around 2000 diabetics took part, however with the support of Roche Diagnostics, the Diabetes Hand Foundation is hoping to draw around 100,000 views of its promotional video.

For its part, Roche has agreed to donate \$1 for every video view to the Insulin For Life and the Life of a Child program, which provide diabetes medication and supplies to children suffering the condition in developing nations.

"What may seem like a small donation goes a very long way indeed in the countries we work in," said the director of Insulin for Life Australia, Ron Raab.

"In Ecuador, for example, less than \$50 will cover the transport and handling cost for us to send donated insulin to a child for an entire year.

"Through the Big Blue Test, we can help reach more children who need insulin," he added.

The test will take place online at <http://bigbluetest.org> on Sunday.

educational booklet, a new info segment on its website - and a new product, 'Women's Bio Balance'.

The booklet opens with a 'You're not alone' segment, where women have shared their stories; and then moves into an explanation of vaginal imbalance, its symptoms and causes; followed by a 'To Do list' for optimum downstairs health; a guide to stressing less; a 'Down There Diet' and recipes; and lastly a FAQ section.

"We hope that the Little Pink Book of Down There puts these negative feelings in perspective and helps women understand that vaginal imbalance is a natural condition, but one that's easy to avoid with some simple steps," Stone said.

Blackmores website also now features a 'down there' section, which includes a link to download the Pink Book, as well as links to womens stories, a 'did you know' section, and product information.

The new Women's Bio Balance product contains Lactobacillus rhamnosus, GR-1, and Lactobacillus reuteri, RC-14, which work to colonise the vagina with good bacteria and maintain healthy vaginal microflora.

Women's Bio Balance is packaged in a discreet vial, does not need refrigeration and can easily fit in a handbag.

According to a recent Newpoll study 30% of Australian women aged between 18-64 years have claimed to have suffered from thrush in the last two years.

Despite this figure, to date, there has been no natural probiotic offering in Australia which is designed to help restore and rebalance lactobacilli in the vagina.

Currently the total pharmacy Australian gynaecological market (including prescriptions) is worth \$54m, with the OTC thrush market worth \$30m - more details at [www.blackmores.com.au/downthere](http://www.blackmores.com.au/downthere).

## Chemists golf day out

**MAXIMUM** capacity has been reached for entrants to this year's Qld Chemist Golf Day (15 Nov).

136 entrants have signed up for a day of golf at the Lakelands Golf Club, in a bid to raise funds for the children's autism charity the aeioU Foundation.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**GOLDFISH** prove hygiene.

South Korea is planning on placing goldfish into restroom water supplies to ensure the purity of the water therein, during the global G20 Summit.

The move has drawn the ire of animal rights groups, who say that putting the goldfish in contaminated water would cause them an agonising death, as they suffer the same amounts of pain as dogs and cats.

South Korea has however defended the move saying that it was an "eco friendly" way of ensuring that world leaders did not drink or wash with bad water.

**THIS** is expialidocious!

Iconic actor Dick Van Dyke (of Mary Poppins fame) has credited the saving of his life to a porpoise, which he says gently nudged him to shore after he fell asleep on his surfboard.

According to reports the 84-year old Van Dyke fell asleep on his board after feeling sick whilst paddling out into the waves.

He awoke to find himself out of sight of land, and surrounded by fins.

"I started paddling with the swells and I started seeing fins swimming around me and I thought 'I'm dead!'" he said.

"They turned out to be porpoises.

"And they pushed me all the way to shore," he added.

**NO** more poop and run.

Fed up with dog owners who don't scoop the poop, community members in the UK's Milton Keynes council area have hired a private detective agency to install spy cameras around popular dog walking spots to catch lazy dog owners who fail to clean up after their dogs do their "business".

"People are using us to shop known offenders who have been getting away with it for a long time," said doggie detective Mark Halstead.

"Dog fouling is filthy and dangerous to children and we won't tolerate it," he added.