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CONTENT ALERT

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Crossmark and Kochie

PHARMACY and retail services company, Crossmark, has been enlisted by celebrity finance guru and channel 7 *Sunrise* presenter David Koch to lead a session at the upcoming *Kochie's Business Builders Boot Camp*.

The event, to be held 07-08 Apr, is aimed at helping small businesses grow and realise their potential.

Crossmark's session, titled 'Growing a Successful Business,' will be led by Asia Pacific CEO Kevin Moore, and will be drawn from his hands on experience growing a business from 80 to 1,000 staff over an eight year period.

See www.kbbevents.com.au.

Flu frontliners

PHARMACISTS are being called upon by the Influenza Specialist Group, to challenge risky behaviour of people when it comes to preventing the transmission of influenza and seeking vaccination.

The calls come on the back of a survey of 1,120 people which found that whilst 82% of people know that vaccination would benefit healthy people, 72% are unsure if they will get vaccinated.

In addition just under half of all respondents said they had never had a flu shot and 32% said they will not be getting an influenza vaccination this year.

The main roadblocks against vaccination were found to include the "hassle" of organising it (40%) and not needing it because respondents said they "never got the flu" (18%).

See youtube.com/flutube100.

PBS price cuts start to bite

STATUTORY price reductions of up to 16% apply to nine new drugs from today, under the ongoing PBS reform process in Australia.

Effective 01 April the additions to the list include atenolol, epirubicin hydrochloride, filgrastim, idarubicin hydrochloride, isotretinoin, pioglitazone, risedronate sodium, risedronate sodium and calcium carbonate, and risedronate sodium and calcium carbonate with colecalciferol, with the addition of the osteoporosis medications following last year's addition of this group to the F2 formulary.

The Health Department has also today added new medications to its list of formulary allocations, including adapalene with benzoyl peroxide (F1), filgrastim (F2), idarubicin (F2), pioglitazone (F2), risedronic acid (F2), romiplostim (F1) and zonisamide (F1).

New drugs subject to expanded and accelerated price disclosure from today include filgrastim, idarubicin, pioglitazone and risedronic acid.

The PBS website today also corrects pricing published in the Chemotherapy Pharmaceuticals

Renal dialysis bus

A NEW renal dialysis bus servicing remote communities in the Northern Territory has been launched this week in Alice Springs.

The bus consists of a renal dialysis module made up of a two-chair, nurse assisted renal dialysis clinic area for up to four patients plus onboard accom for staff.

Access Program Supplement, with updated details provided for gemcitabine and paclitaxel.

MEANWHILE seven new medicines have also been added to the PBS today, including Nplate (romiplostim) for the treatment of adult patients with the rare blood disorder chronic immune thrombocytopenic purpura, as well as Humira (*PD* yesterday).

See www.pbs.gov.au.

New generics promo

NPS Australia will launch the next phase of its Be Medicinewise campaign this Sunday 03 April.

TV commercials will be shown on Channel 7, 7TWO and SBS, with print advertisements in a number of Pacific Magazines publications.

NPS clinical adviser Danielle Stowasser said that "switching brands generally has little impact but for some people it can lead to confusion and subsequent medicine mishaps.

"With a number of blockbuster medicines coming off patent in the next few years, it's timely to pickup the conversation about medicine options again," she added.

Pharmacists are being advised that the campaign could lead to an increase in questions from patients about why there is a choice between some medications.

See nps.org.au/medicinewise.

GMiA \$2.7m benefits

MEMBERS of the Generic Medicines Industry Association spent almost \$2.7 million last year on "non-price benefits" extended to Australian pharmacists.

According to reports published on the GMiA website, Alphapharm provided \$551,000 in benefits including conference sponsorships, pharmacy aids, cooperative merchandising and movie tickets.

The figure for Apotex was \$410,000 including quality use of medicine programs and "access to programs and software tools designed to increase generic substitution," plus meals provided during meetings and vouchers; while Ascent Pharmaceuticals spent \$626,000 on items including hospitality, computer equipment and a pharmacy iPhone application.

Sigma/Aspen's pharmacist benefits amounted to \$232,000, while Hospira spent \$874,000 on nurse funding for clozapine and apomine.

The other GMiA member, Spirit Pharmaceuticals, provided nil benefits because it doesn't market its products directly to retail or hospital pharmacies.

Roche test approval

A NEW test manufactured by Roche for cytomegalovirus has been approved in Europe, allowing physicians to measure the viral load in transplant patients.

Business Development Managers



Your Pharmacy Partner

On the back of an extremely successful launch at APP, APHS Packaging is recruiting for passionate and committed pharmaceutical sales professionals, with a demonstrable track record in achieving results.

APHS Packaging is a leading supplier of dose administration aids for pharmacies and aged care facilities across Australia. Through state of the art packaging and inspection systems, APHS Packaging produces easy-to-use medication sachets within a highly regulated manufacturing environment. With APHS Packaging poised for strong growth, this role will play a key part in the organisation's overall success.

Reporting to the National Sales Manager, these hands-on roles will focus on the new customer acquisition, as well as promoting the expanding product offerings to the existing customer base. You will achieve this by owning the customer relationships from origination to initiation.

Register your interest by contacting Peter Maloney, 0408 705 662 or peter.maloney@aphspackaging.com.au.

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*Approximate and average figures based on a 1.25% PBS discount reduction

Valeant & Cephalon

VALEANT Pharmaceuticals has approached global pharmaceutical company, Cephalon, with a proposal to acquire the company for \$73 per share.

Estimated to be worth US\$5.7 billion, the offer is a 23% premium to Cephalon's current share price.

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.

30 Mar 2011: Understanding the Issues Surrounding Infant Nutrition; Clarion Hotel, Mackay Marina, Qld; for details call - 07 3896 1900.

03 Apr 2011: Building Blocks For the Delivery of Professional Services; PSA National Office, Deakin ACT; for details email - act.branch@psa.org.au.

03 Apr 2011: First Aid Certificate Course; Chatswood Club, NSW, for details email - melenyhui@psansw.org.au.

04 Apr 2011: PSA Road Show - Kick Start Your CPD For 2011; Goulburn NSW; for details email - beryl.park@psa.org.au.

05 Apr 2011: Individualised Medicine: A Focus On Pharmacogenomic; Lecture Theatre 1, Monash University, VIC; details on 03 9389 4013.

10 Apr 2011: Practical Diabetes Management for Pharmacy; Newcastle; for details call - 02 9431 1125.

17 Apr 2011: Interprofessional Collaboration: Overcome Psych Barriers; Gosford RSL Club; for details call - 02 9431 1125.

01-23 May: 36th PSA Offshore Refresher Conference, Venice, Salzburg, Rome, Bucharest - www.psa.org.au.

17-19 Jun 2011: Pharmacy Expo, Sydney Exhibition Centre www.pharmacyexpo.com.au.

Arthritis spending triples

AUSTRALIA'S expenditure on disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs) has tripled over the last decade, according to the latest report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The report, titled *The use of disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs for the management of rheumatoid arthritis*, looked at the cost to the community of first-line rheumatoid arthritis drugs between 2003 and 2007 and found that 3.4 million DMARDs and biologic DMARDs were dispensed.

During the same period the cost of DMARDs and bDMARDs supplied through the PBS was estimated at \$472m, with the annual cost increasing threefold from \$46m in 2003 to around \$134m in 2007.

The rising supply costs of DMARDs, according to the report, is linked to the increased supply of biologic DMARDs, with drugs such as etanercept and adalimumab, accounting for over half the total

cost despite their relatively smaller script volume (4% of the total).

"During this 5-year period almost 84% of the costs of conventional DMARDs was paid for by the Australian Government under the PBS," said report author Dr Tomoko Sugiura.

The report estimated that 236,000 Australians were supplied with at least one conventional DMARD through the PBS between 2003-07, with that number contrasted to 7,298 for bDMARDs.

Patients aged between 55-64 were the largest consumers of DMARDs, with the highest proportion of users being female, who accounted for two thirds of DMARD prescriptions.

The report's release coincides with Arthritis Awareness Week, with the Health Department saying that the condition is the leading cause of ongoing pain and disability in Australia, with about 6.3 million people affected by chronic bone and joint conditions.



DISPENSARY CORNER

WAKE up weed beats out coffee.

According to US newspapers, the number of medical marijuana dispensaries in the southern Californian city of San Diego is greater than the number of Starbucks coffee outlets.

The story, sprung from the current debate over new medical marijuana regulations which passed this week, compared the 166 marijuana dispensaries within the city limits to 164 Starbucks ranging from Mora Mesa to the Mexican border.

LIVING little and large in China.

China's shortest man, Zhang Huan has joined with the tallest man in Aisa, Xu Guoyuan, to raise much needed funds for childrens charities.

Standing just 101cm high, Huan and the 238cm Guoyuan have arranged a month long series of double-act performances under the title the Heaven and Earth Brothers in which they will perform comedy skits and magic tricks.

The pair are hoping to raise around \$80,000 to build a home for disabled children in Chongqing.

"We live together now which means we have to have everything at different heights - two toilets, two sinks, two kitchen tops," said Guoyuan.

"Luckily we save on transport because I can just pop Huan in my pocket," he added.

THAT'S a place you don't want to get bitten!

A seven foot snake was found in the bowl of a home toilet by a seven-year old girl in the German city of Hanover.

The family quickly called wildlife authorities, who when they arrived found the snake had disappeared back down the S bend.

It is thought the snake may have belonged to a neighbour and escaped into the drainage system.

WIN A MOTHER'S DAY PACK



With Mother's Day only six weeks away, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win a special pack which will spoil your Mum (or you!), courtesy of **Plunkett Pharmaceuticals**.

The pack contains two full size products - Advanced Collagen Lift Moisturiser and Advanced Skin Perfecting Exfoliator, valued at \$99.90.

Moisturise in the morning, and use the exfoliator followed by the moisturiser at night to rejuvenate and lift as well as reduce fine lines and discolouration. Available at selected pharmacies and online at www.plunkettpharmaceuticals.com.au.

For your chance to win this fantastic Mother's Day gift, simply send in an answer to the daily question below:

True or False - Skin Perfecting Exfoliator should be used only at night?

The first correct entry received each day wins!

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

Hint! Visit www.plunkettpharmaceuticals.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Lindsay Scott** from **Broken Hill Base Hospital Pharmacy**.