

AHPRA to adjust intern starting dates

THE Australian Health Practitioners Registration Board has been asked to look into the effects on registration start dates for interns whose applications for registration were affected by delays at the implementation of the new national registration scheme.

The Pharmacy Board of Australia resolved to request the move following concerns raised by several interns about the impact of the delays on their future general registration.

AHPRA will identify and contact affected interns with a revised start date for supervised practice hours, and in most cases interns will not have to provide additional information.

Streamlined regos

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has approved initiatives which will streamline the application process for people applying for general registration as pharmacists for the first time.

Prospective graduates are encouraged to apply for registration early via an online system on the AHPRA website.

Changes for HMRs, RMMRs

GROUNDBREAKING changes to funding arrangements for Home Medicine Reviews and Residential Medication Management Reviews will create new career paths for pharmacists, according to AACP chair Debbie Rigby.

The AACP revealed the moves yesterday, with the changes part of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

From 01 October, GPs will be able to refer patients directly to accredited pharmacists for HMRs, and from the same date rural loading payments under the HMR program will be based on the consumer's location, rather than the location of the pharmacy providing the services.

And services under the RMMR program will be separated from QUM payments, with QUM services able to be conducted by registered pharmacists who can contract separately with the Aged Care Facility.

Rigby said the flexibility offered by the changes was a "maturation of the profession."

"It is time to release individual accredited pharmacists to innovate their own business models to align

with general practitioner and consumer expectations," she said.

Further details will be clarified in the coming months, with the Health Department, Guild and PSA currently working on implementation details including Professional Standards and Guidelines.

PSA President Warwick Plunkett said the changes were "a long overdue win for independent accredited pharmacists who have been hampered in the past by the inability of a doctor to refer a HMR to them to perform".

Guild President Kos Sclavos said that the guild "accepts that the direct referral HMR model is an alternative pathway to the existing model."

"Our main concern with regard to the changed arrangements is that the patient's community pharmacy is still 'kept in the loop,' as this is in the best interests of the patient," he said.

And Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia president Sue Kirra warmly welcomed the moves, saying SHPA "looks forward to working closely with AACP on the system for hospital referred HMRs".

New English policy

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has approved a new English language policy, outlining circumstances in which it may grant exemptions to its English language skills registration standard.

Exemptions may be granted to applicants who have successfully completed the last two years of secondary education in English in one of the countries listed in the standard.

In the cases of applicants required to provide English language test results but where these have expired, exemptions may be granted where applicants have continuously participated in pharmacy study since the test was undertaken, or used English as the primary language of practice in a country where English is the native or first language.

Flu up 400% this year

THERE have been about four times as many influenza cases reported so far this year versus 2010, due to a spate of summer flu cases, according to the Health Dept's latest Influenza Surveillance Report.

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SHPA registrations

REGISTRATIONS are now open for SHPA's National Conference, Medicines Management 2011.

Set to take place between 10-13 November at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart (Tas), the conference will showcase the latest in technological and pharmacy practice innovations, and will feature five keynote speakers.

To learn more, or register see www.mm2011shpa.com.

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.

SILVERWATER resort on Phillip Island (Victoria) is offering Apartments from \$10 per night.

Applicable for Mon and Thurs nights during the July school holidays (based on a three night stay), the \$10 apartments include resort rooms and one bedroom apartments.

Two bedroom apartments are also discounted on Mondays and Thursdays to \$20, whilst three bedroom apartments are available for \$30.

Standard room rates start at \$155 per night for a resort room, \$180 per night for a one bedroom apartment and two bedroom apartments from \$225 per night.

For details call 1800 033 403.

THE Novotel Bali Benoa is enticing Aussies to Bali with prices from US\$69 per night for two people.

The deal is valid between now and 23 December and must be booked at www.accorhotels.com/1922.

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Sigma terms offset Pfizer

THE adjustment of trading terms for pharmacy customers by Sigma Pharmaceuticals has "largely offset the impact from Pfizer's decision to bypass existing wholesalers," according to Sigma ceo Mark Hooper.

Speaking at the company's annual general meeting yesterday, Hooper said the measures were "holding in the market," with Sigma reducing its average debtor days to 77, down 16% on last year's figure.

He was also upbeat about the prospects for the company going forward, with strong trading for the year to date reflecting market share gains and changes to the Sigma cost base following the sale of its Pharmaceuticals Division to Aspen Pharmacare last year.

However Hooper declined to provide any guidance for profit for the current financial year due to the pending negotiation

of "a number of key customer contracts" - believed to include a possible deal with Pharmacy Alliance after its API falling out.

A comprehensive review of the business following the sale to Aspen has led to a "reinvigorated base for us to work from," with Hooper outlining several initiatives including warehouse upgrades.

The review emphasised retail pharmacy services as a "key opportunity for future growth," with Sigma set to invest further in support programs for both banner members and independent pharmacies.

Hooper said Sigma was also set to introduce new systems to support Pharmacy Health Management services within its pharmacist customer base.

The meeting also saw the retirement of pharmacist Bill Scott from the Sigma Board, after 15 years as a director of the company.

WIN A HAIR NUTRITION PACK



Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving two lucky readers the chance to win a hair supplements pack for women, courtesy of **Hair Nutrition**.

Ladies, is your hair feeling thin and brittle? Does your hair seem

to break or shed easily? Is it lacking strength and shine? Has it lost its body and bounce? Hair Nutrition can help!

Hair Nutrition for Women feeds your hair with a rich supply of nutrients where it matters – the site of the hair formation, the hair follicle. It feeds your hair from the inside out helping you to get thicker, fuller, stronger and faster growing hair with results in just 30 days.

You can win this effective and trusted product along with some Hair Nutrition Intensive Protein Shots which gives your hair that extra boost of nutritional protein when it needs it most.

To win, simply send in a correct answer to the daily question below.

Hair Nutrition gives you results in just ___ days.

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

First 2 correct entries received will win!

Hint: Visit: www.keysun.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, **Julie Wyborn** from **Planet Health & Marissa White** of **Friendly Care Pharmacy Booval**.

DISPENSARY CORNER

FLEXIBILITY pays off for one thief.

A spectacularly limber thief has pulled off a bizarre series of heists by squeezing himself into suitcases and having his partner-in-crime deposit him for luggage storage during a 90-minute bus ride.

Once safely inside the bus luggage compartment and into the trip, the man would unzip himself and raid bags for valuables, placing them inside a smaller bag and sealing it and himself back in the suitcase.

The man would then get collected inside the suitcase at the end of the tip by his partner.

Authorities were alerted to the crimes after a number of passengers from different trips reported the loss of valuables.

The man was subsequently arrested in his suitcase after police decided to inspect the dodgy looking bag.

SOCIAL networking gone mad.

A Dutch woman has had the profile photos of all of her 152 Facebook 'friends' tattooed on her arm (below).

The anonymous female has gone further by posting a video of the tattooing procedure on YouTube.

"These are not all my friends - just the people I care most about," she said.

"To me it represents who I am right now and the time we live in".

To view the graphic procedure see youtube.com/pharmacydaily.

