

Generic pricing getting you down?

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PHARMACY ALLIANCE
Freedom to choose

Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Anthony White, CEO of Terry White Chemists**

Pharmacy as we know and love it is a vital cog in the wheel of the good health of our nation.

Strong relationships between a pharmacist and the local community underpin success and lead to improved health outcomes.

Community pharmacy is a relatively high cost model built on skinny margins and subsidised dispensary dealings, and changes to the PBS now serve to compound the challenges.

Yet the valuable health solutions community pharmacy provides are worth fighting for, and as an industry we all have a role to play in ensuring its growth.

To this end, we are set to unveil our new Neighbourhood format – an incentivised alternative entry point to the Terry White Chemists brand for smaller pharmacies.

It follows the successful completion of twelve months trade by our trial store which doubled its sales during that period.

The Neighbourhood format emphasises strong local ties, allows pharmacies to tailor their offer to suit their own community, upholds community pharmacy values and promotes health as a priority.

If the industry can deliver enhanced opportunities for small community chemists we all stand to gain.

By improving much-needed access to high quality advice and services we ensure the wheels of pharmacy continue to turn in a way which promotes the good health of our nation.

A welcome drug price drop

THE latest round of price cuts for off patent medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, which came into effect yesterday, have been welcomed by Medicines Australia, which said that there should be more such reductions in the future as more drugs go off-patent and become subject to price disclosure.

The price cuts mean that as of 01 April, 74 commonly used off-patent medicines on the PBS have had their price reduced by between 10% and 82%.

"These types of price reductions which capitalise on market competition provide the Government with the financial headroom to list new medicines whilst ensuring the PBS remains sustainable in the future," said Medicines Australia, Chief Executive, Dr Brendan Shaw.

Shaw also said that the system of mandatory price reduction will drive savings through a competitive off patent market.

"The system requires manufacturers to disclose the actual price at which they are selling medicines in the market, allowing Government to adjust the price it pays.

"These are enormous savings but effectively they will mean a better deal for taxpayers and a more sustainable PBS," he said.

According to Shaw, these savings will continue as more drugs come off-patent and are subject to price disclosure, which will put further

downward pressure on growth and negate the argument for further reform.

Whilst welcoming the change, Shaw did spare a thought for companies taking "substantial cuts", saying that "it is important to note that these price reductions will cause significant commercial difficulty for many of the companies".

"Some companies have taken price cuts of more than 70 per cent for a single medicine, and absorbing reductions of that magnitude is obviously challenging," he said.

"But the MoU will ensure a stable business environment for manufacturers because it carries a Government commitment that industry will not be asked to bear any further price-related savings measures before 2014," he added.

Tobacco crack down

THE US Food and Drug Authority is cracking down on tobacco companies, telling them that it will strongly enforce the rule prohibiting them from claiming that a tobacco product is less harmful without first providing extensive scientific evidence supporting the claim.

The evidence will also have to demonstrate that the product will benefit public health as a whole, and not just individual tobacco users.

See www.fda.gov.

DISPENSARY CORNER

SIX feet under.

When one stops to admire one's work, it is a rare occasion that action will lead to finding oneself six-feet under, unless of course you are a gravedigger.

And that's exactly what happened to one such professional, Stefan Faerber, who had to be hauled out of the earth by a team of firemen after having paused to admire the sharp lines, and exactitude of his coffin hole.

Fortunately for Faerber, he was able to get mobile reception in his six foot hole, and could call for help.

"It was his last job of the day so he's lucky he had his phone with him to call for help - or he might have spent a very uncomfortable night next to some of his previous customers," said a police spokesperson.

FAST food.

Pizza lovers beware, a new pizza shaped fridge magnet which is programed with your favourite pizza and the number of the pizza store to get it from, may ruin your healthy eating plans.

The magnet, produced by a Dubai-based company, allows pizza lovers to order their favourite cheezy treat with just the press of its button, sending the order to the programmed store via Bluetooth technology.

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE...



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