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Kill tropical diseases

THE International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) has announced a 14 billion treatment commitment from the research-based pharmaceutical industry to support the elimination or control of nine key neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

The donations follow a WHO announcement of new targets for NTDs whose elimination or control is achievable with adequate supply and distribution of the relevant medicines.

Around one billion people (or one person in seven) suffer from NTDs annually.

The nine NTDs that will be focused on represent more than 90% of the global NTD burden, and include fascioliasis, chagas disease (American trypanosomiasis), leprosy, human African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), blinding trachoma, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminthiasis, onchocerciasis (river blindness), and lymphatic filariasis.

Utilise Aussie pharmacists

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is calling on the Government to provide \$6.3m for the establishment of the Pharmacists and Chronic Disease (PACD) program.

The calls are part of the PSA's 2012-13 Budget submission, which explains that the PACD would have two components: the Pharmacists in Remote Aboriginal Health Services project; and the Mental Health Liaison Pharmacist project.

According to the PSA the PACD would target key shortcomings in the safety and quality of health services for high-risk population groups in the community, create synergies with additional value to the Government's health-reform framework, address unmet needs for services, build capacity in the health workforce, and give expression to the Government's policy objectives underpinning the key national health strategies.

“PSA believes that for a small investment by Government,

pharmacists can help deliver major improvements to health outcomes for patients with mental health problems,” said National President of the PSA, Grant Kardachi.

“A liaison pharmacist program would help people with mental health problems transition between acute care – or the hospital sector – back into the community where most of their care is provided,” he added.

Speaking about the Pharmacists in Remote Aboriginal Health Services project, Kardachi said that “to date, the vast skills and knowledge that pharmacists possess have not been strategically utilised to address shortcomings in these areas and the PSA submission for a pilot program presents a pragmatic and cost-effective way to start reversing this trend.”

Pharmacy Board audits

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia is reminding pharmacists that during the last week of January 2012, AHPRA will begin its pilot practitioner audits.

Pharmacists under the audit spotlight have been randomly selected by the AHPRA IT system and should expect that the audit will look into their criminal history, recency of practice, continuing professional development and professional indemnity insurance.

The audit will take three months to complete, and pharmacists who have been selected have already been notified via mail.

MEANWHILE the Board has also published an Advertising Fact Sheet which features guidelines for advertising of regulated health services, as well as a FAQ sheet for pharmacists.

The sheets are available to view on the Board website under the ‘latest news’ heading - www.pharmacyboard.gov.au.

The Board is also calling for Prescribing Competencies Framework submissions from pharmacists and pharmacy organisations, and for feedback on the Framework via an NPS survey ([CLICK HERE](#)).

Guild backs pharmacists

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has come out swinging after news stories surfaced claiming pharmacists are swindling the PBS system.

The reports were sparked by a PBS audit, which found that almost \$2m in PBS medicines were wrongly claimed last year, a figure up 50% compared to the previous year.

According to the reportage, around 170 pharmacists and pharmacies were found to have made wrongful PBS claims last year, including one Qld pharmacist who has had to pay back \$39,000 after repeatedly claiming prescriptions multiple times and also claiming prescriptions after a patient's death.

Responding to the claims of widespread pharmacy fraud, the Guild said that “in most cases these pharmacy owners genuinely believe they have acted in the best interests of the patient and taxpayers”.

“Many private hospital pharmacies are affected by this,” said Guild National President, Kos Sclavos.

“In these circumstances supply of the medication has actually occurred and there is an audit trail to prove it.

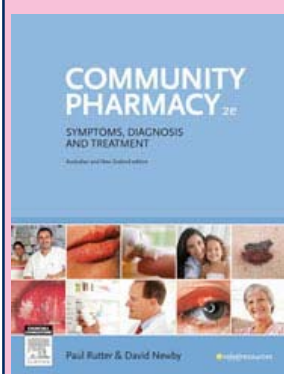
“Often, the system has broken down in the administrative process, with a lag in the timing of prescriptions being written and lodged with pharmacies.

“I can think of nothing more shameful than expecting a pharmacy to go to relatives of the deceased patient to ask for the full cost reimbursement of a supply that has genuinely occurred, sometimes for thousands of dollars in the case of some chemotherapy medicines,” he added.

Sclavos said that the whilst steps were being put into place to address some of these problems in the nursing home sector, in the form of a medication chart rather than a prescription, there is now an urgent need to address this issue in relation to hospitals.

“The Guild does not support any pharmacist involved in any form of PBS fraud, but in the current community pharmacy setting where every prescription can be monitored real-time through PBS online it is our belief that systems are in place to minimise any possible fraud activity,” Sclavos said.

WIN A COMMUNITY PHARMACY BOOK



Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with Elsevier Australia this week and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a *Community Pharmacy: Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment 2e* book, valued at \$115 each.

Now in its second edition, *Community Pharmacy: Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment 2e* by Paul Rutter and David Newby is an essential pharmacy resource. Ideal for both practicing pharmacists and pharmacy students, *Community Pharmacy* provides a guide to differential diagnosis

of symptoms commonly seen by community pharmacists throughout Australia and New Zealand. This new edition now includes online multiple choice questions designed for Pharmacists seeking self directed CPD learning!

For more information visit: <http://elsevierhealth.com.au>.

For your chance to win this great book, simply be the first person to send through the correct answer to the daily question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

How many CPD points are pharmacists expected to complete by the period ending 30th September 2012 to maintain their registration?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Alexandra Gorza** from **Coral Coast Pharmacies, QLD**.

Guild Update

This week's update from the Pharmacy Guild

Supply and PBS

One of the initiatives of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement was "Supply and PBS Claiming from a Medication Chart in Residential Aged Care Facilities".

This initiative will address issues faced in these facilities regarding the supply and PBS claiming from an available prescription.

Introducing supply from a medication chart will streamline supply and claiming by community pharmacy ensuring medicines are supplied in accordance with the prescriber's most recent intentions.

As part of the initiative the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in HealthCare has commenced development of a national standard medication chart for use in residential aged care facilities.

The National Residential Medication Chart (NRMC) Project aims to improve the safety of medication management in residential aged care facilities (RACFs) through standardised medication charting and medication management practice.

The Commission has published a Residential Aged Care Facility Medication Chart Staff Survey 2012 which is designed to collect views and perspectives from residential aged care staff on medication charts and their use in medication administration in RACFs.

The Guild encourages relevant staff to visit the Commission's website [[CLICK HERE](#)] to read more about the project and fill out the survey on medication charts to assist in this valuable project.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

Pfizer defends direct system

PFIZER has defended its direct distribution system saying there is no evidence to suggest government intervention in the distribution of medicines is necessary, after the release of National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA) research which found that patients were often forced to wait for days for medications if they lodged their prescriptions outside the timeframe for next-day delivery by Pfizer (*PD* yesterday).

According to the NPSA research, patients whose scripts are lodged after 3pm Monday - Wednesday and 4pm Thursday, are facing waits of at least two days for the delivery of Pfizer drugs not stocked by their pharmacist, compared to drugs delivered under the full line

Skin cancer approval

A NEW weapon has been launched against skin cancer, with the US Food and Drug Administration's approval of Erivedge (vismodegib),

The drug is approved to treat adult patients with basal cell carcinoma, the most common type of skin cancer, and is intended for use in patients with locally advanced basal cell cancer who are not candidates for surgery or radiation and for patients whose cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

Erivedge comes in a once-daily pill format and works by inhibiting the Hedgehog pathway, a pathway that is active in most basal cell cancers and only a few normal tissues, such as hair follicles.

Davies joins Hospira

HOSPIRA has appointed Richard Davies as its Senior Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer.

Davies will join the company next week, and will take on responsibilities including developing and executing Hospira's global commercial strategies and delivering profitable revenue growth across the company's product portfolio.

distribution system which were found to have a same day or the next day delivery rate.

Commenting on the research Pfizer said "pharmacists know they can contact Pfizer and ensure their patients' get their medicines".

"We make urgent deliveries on the same day wherever possible.

"We have delivered more than 9,500 urgent orders.

Pfizer also said that it currently has more than 60 products on its critical products list, and that these are also delivered on the same day wherever possible.

According to the drug giant, an independent PwC review of DHL systems and controls relating to its delivered on time data for October 2011 found that more than 99% of Pfizer deliveries were made on time throughout the month.

The auditor also confirmed that the DHL systems and controls "can be relied upon to produce materially accurate 'delivered on time' information".

"The wholesalers do not release the same level of information about their own service delivery," Pfizer said.

"The wholesalers have not said how patients are impacted by their delivery performance," Pfizer added.

The company continued its attack against the wholesalers saying that they get almost \$200 million from the taxpayer every year as a subsidy to fund their deliveries and that they have a commercial motivation to be critical of Pfizer.

Discussing its generics business, Pfizer said that with its first non-Pfizer generics already in the market, it will begin to offer competitive arrangements across its generics portfolio as it continues to grow in the future.

"This is good for the PBS and good for consumers," Pfizer said.

"The wholesalers have alignments with generic manufacturers which give their medicines preference over Pfizer medicines.

"This is why we are not delivering our medicines via the wholesalers," Pfizer added.



DISPENSARY CORNER

GOT milk?

Milk may be making a fashionable comeback into the boardroom, and as a snack for scientists everywhere, after a study published in the *International Dairy Journal* found that having at least one glass of milk each day could not only boost your intake of much-needed key nutrients, but it could also positively impact your brain and mental performance.

During the study researchers put 900 adults aged from 23 to 98 through a series of brain tests, including visual-spatial, verbal and working memory tests – and tracked the milk consumption habits of the participants

The researchers found that adults with higher intakes of milk and milk products scored significantly higher on memory and other brain function tests than those who drank little to no milk.

Milk drinkers were also found to be five times less likely to "fail" the test, compared to non milk drinkers.

Interestingly the benefits of milk beverages persisted even after controlling for other factors that can affect brain health, including cardiovascular health and other lifestyle and diet factors.

BODY art.

Recently 200 'body artists' gathered together in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas to show off their work, some of which has required surgical intervention.

Turning local heads, the artists strutted the streets sporting full body tattoos, multiple piercings and 'stretches', skin implants such as horns, and dental work including sharpened 'vampire teeth'.

