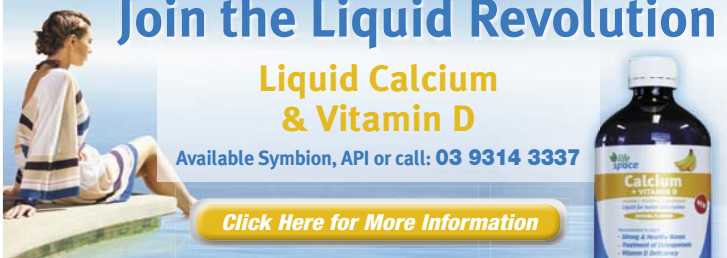


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This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win a **Sukin** Skincare pamper pack valued at \$94.60 each.

Each pack includes: Cream Cleanser, Hydrating Mist Toner, Facial Moisturiser, Botanical Body Wash, Hydrating Body Lotion, Nourishing Lip Treatment, Certified Organic Rose Hip Oil and Purifying Facial Masque.

To win, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the daily question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Complete this sentence:
 "Creating skincare that doesn't cost the earth requires a strong commitment to _____"

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner **Anna So** from **Optimal Pharmacy Lane Cove**.

SMH slams Pharmacy Guild

THE Pharmacy Guild has reacted strongly to a front page article in today's *Sydney Morning Herald*, with spokesman Greg Turnbull saying the story "reveals a gross misunderstanding of the PBS and of the price disclosure mechanism".

The story accuses pharmacists of using a "loophole" in the PBS reforms to boost their profits, citing a Guild communication which urges pharmacists to make deals with suppliers immediately after drugs lose their patent protection to lock in discounts "while still receiving government reimbursement at artificially high rates".

Turnbull said the "fact sheet" was actually published last September to help pharmacists and staff understand the 01 April reforms.

"Far from being a clandestine document it was distributed widely... in fact the Guild is happy for pharmacists to use the fact sheet to respond to any patient queries regarding this misleading article designed to alarm patients.

"Through the price disclosure mechanism, which the *SMH* clearly does not understand, introductory prices offered to pharmacists by generic manufacturers will flow through to savings to the

Government," Turnbull added.

The newspaper has highlighted that the fact sheet was produced with the assistance of Ranbaxy, and claims that it "shows pharmacists how they can manipulate government price controls".

However the Guild says the offering of trading terms when generic alternatives enter a market is a normal commercial process, and pointed out a comment by a Health Department spokesman who said bulk buying in the first month "rarely occurred".

GMIA welcomes bill

THE Generic Medicines Industry Association has "strongly welcomed" the passing of the new Intellectual Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Bill 2011 (*PD* yesterday).

The GMIA said the move will encourage investment in research and technology, with the current balance of laws "not in the public's best interest".

"Patents that have been invalidated in other jurisdictions continue to deliver the owners of these patents rents in Australia, resulting in higher prices to the Australian public," it said.

Can pharmacy thrive?

FORMER Pfizer, Merck, Alphapharm and Mylan executive John Montgomery will deliver a lecture titled "Can pharmacy thrive beyond the patent cliff" at an event in Sydney next month.

It's part of the PDL Centenary Speaker Series, with Montgomery expected to give insights into the PBS reforms and their implications for the future of pharmacy.

In the presentation Montgomery will draw on new research from the partnership between UTS Pharmacy and Cegecim Strategic Data "that offers pharmacists hope for their professional future".

Registration is essential for the Tue 17 April event, and is free for all PDL members.

The lecture has also been accredited by the Australian Pharmacy Council as attracting one CPD credit for attendees.

RSVPs by Thursday 12 April to lyndall.jonas@pdlappco.com.au.

Avastin approval

THE TGA has approved Avastin (bevacizumab) in combination with carboplatin and paclitaxel for the first line treatment of patients with advanced epithelial ovarian, fallopian tube or primary peritoneal cancer.

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Travel Specials

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KEEN skiers will be pleased to hear that US snow giant Vail Resorts has released its Epic Pass for 2012/13, costing just US\$659 for a full season pass valid at Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone, Heavenly, Northstar, Kirkwood and Arapahoe Basin.

At that price it pays for itself in less than six days of skiing - perfect for Aussie snowhounds heading to the US for Christmas.

See www.vailresorts.com.

RAIL Europe is offering a range of 2-for-1 deals for travellers in Europe, with the specials including the popular London Pass, Paris Pass and Berlin Pass.

See www.raileurope.com.au.

Sigma back in the black

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning released its full year results for the year to 31 Jan, with a \$49m profit - a major turnaround from last year's \$235m loss which followed the dramatic writedown of the value of its generics business.

The company attributed the performance to gains in market share and improved working capital.

Overall revenue dipped 2.1% to \$2.91 billion due to the impact of PBS reform and the Pfizer direct distribution system, "however on a like-for-like it was up 10 per cent due to PBS growth and increased market share," Sigma said.

CEO and MD Mark Hooper said Sigma had delivered on its promise of sustainable improvement, rewarding shareholders with a total return of over 70% in the last year.

The company will pay a fully franked 2c per share final dividend.

The results presentation confirmed that extended trade credit arrangements are no longer offered to customers, with cash flow set to improve in 2012/13 from arrangements from customers to repay previous extended credit over a 12-18 month period.

"Sigma continues to build an increasingly more efficient business that will manage market competitiveness into next year," Hooper said.

He added that while the major

PBS reforms are expected to dampen sales, "we will continue to respond through cost reduction measures and the renegotiation of customer terms to negate the impact on Sigma's business".

Hooper flagged expansion of the company's retail operations, with "an exciting new strategy to support our brands and put the customer and pharmacist at the centre of everything we do".

Willach keeps growing

PHARMACY robotics supplier Willach says it now has more than 90 dispensers installed in Australian pharmacies, with a number of projects lined up for 2012 which will see it reach the '100 robots' milestone.

Willach Group owner Jens Willach and the company's International Sales Director Albert Juenger travelled from Germany to attend APP this month.

Juenger said there had been strong interest in the new CONSYS B0 machine, adding: "the robot has a compact footprint and channel storage technology and is therefore well suited to the small footprint Australian dispensaries."

"In view of the upcoming price cuts facing Australian pharmacies, pharmacists need to evolve their businesses and make the dispensary processes a lot more efficient," he added.

DISPENSARY CORNER



SCARY new public service announcements in the USA aim to highlight the risks of smoking by giving tips for living with a tracheotomy.

The Centers for Disease Control ads are titled "Tips from Former Smokers" who have been forced to have surgery so they can breathe through a hole in their neck.

In the ad the patients detail a number of inconveniences about having a tracheotomy, including "when you have a hole in your neck, don't face the shower head."

There's also the confronting "suction out your throat before you eat" as well as "crouch, don't bend over - you don't want to lose the food in your stomach".

ANOTHER example of healthy ageing was seen in Salt Lake City, Utah last year when a 101-year-old woman became the oldest person to paraglide.

Mary Allen Hardison took to the air on 01 September to celebrate her birthday, saying she decided to try up the activity after her 75-year-old son Allen took it up.

The feat was certified last week by Guinness World Records officials, who said it was "pushing record breaking to new heights".

Hardison responded to the attention by telling media "just because you are old doesn't mean you have to sit on your duff all day."

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