

Auxilium expects better

PHARMACEUTICAL company Auxilium has raised its full year 2012 revenue guidance to a range of US\$293 million to US\$315 million.

The company has also reduced its guidance for net loss to a range of US\$5 million to US\$10 million.

Obese freight train

LEADING nutritional expert, Dr John Berardi has warned that obesity and diabetes are "like freight trains running out of control".

"Of course, that's not a fitness industry thing," he said.

"Instead, it has everything to do with the combination of sedentary labor, few natural opportunities for exercise and movement, huge access to high calorie, processed foods, and a tremendous amount of personal stress," he added.

Speaking to reporters in the wake of a recent fitness convention held in the UK, Berardi said that rather than just being an issue of willpower, and telling people to eat less and exercise more, the solution is "about reaching people where they are at".

"It's only when we're willing to reach out beyond fitness club walls and engage people at home, in their workplaces, and in the other places they spend time, that we'll really have the impact we hope to," he said.

Pharmacists on the Board

QUEENSLAND pharmacists Scott McCahon from Weipa on the Cape York Peninsula and Terry White from Brisbane have been appointed as Chairs of their local Health and Hospital Boards.

The appointments are part of the Queensland Government's reintroduction of local Health Boards, with Queensland Health Minister, Lawrence Springborg saying that each Board would require a highly-skilled leader in its local community to serve as its Chair.

Scott McCahon comes to the position as the owner of the 2012 Pharmacy of the Year, which over the years has become an integral part of the Weipa community; whilst Terry White is the Chairman of White Retail and Terry White Chemists and the founding Chairman of the Nudgee College Foundation.

White has also served as a Member of Parliament, Minister of the Crown and President of the Pharmacy Guild.

As a result of their latest appointments, Scott McCahon will now take up the role as Chair of the Cape York Hospital and Health Board whilst Terry White is to become the Chair of the Metro South Board.

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Prostate test warnings

THE Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) has responded to a recent US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation which advises against Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) based prostate cancer screening in men of all age ranges, saying it is "unhelpful and not based on a correct interpretation of the various randomised control trials that have looked into the benefits of PSA testing".

"PCFA recommends that men over the age of 50 years – or 40 years with a family history – speak to their doctor about their individual prostate cancer risk and testing options," the organisation said.

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Guild Update

QCPP Communications Survey

The Quality Care Pharmacy Program (QCPP) began conducting a Guild-approved survey yesterday, with the aim of finding out what QCPP-accredited pharmacies think of the program's communication materials.

This information will be used to assist in the development of future communication materials and determine how they will be provided to pharmacies.

This information will enable QCPP to provide accredited pharmacies with the information they want, the way they want it.

Independent research firm, Colmar Brunton, has been commissioned to undertake this important study.

Over the next month, a representative from Colmar Brunton will contact QCPP accredited pharmacies to invite them to participate in the study by way of an online or telephone survey.

The survey will take around 10 minutes to complete.

All feedback will be treated in the strictest of confidence, and no individuals will be identified in the final report Colmar Brunton produces.

Pharmacies are encouraged to make time available and to contribute to the study.

If you have any queries in relation to the project, please don't hesitate to contact the QCPP helpline on 1300 363 340 or via email at help@qcpp.com.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Antidepressants needed?

NON-drug therapies should be used as first line for mild depression, and in combination with antidepressants for more severe depression, according to NPS.

The comments come on the back of the release of NPS' latest therapeutic program *Depression: Challenges in primary care*, which encourages healthcare providers to carefully assess the severity of depressive symptoms in patients diagnosed with major depressive disorder and then consider whether an antidepressant is necessary.

"When determining if a patient could benefit from taking an antidepressant, a global assessment of the severity of their symptoms should be made, with particular consideration of the degree to which their day to day functioning is impaired and whether they have had suicidal thoughts or intent," said NPS clinical adviser Dr Danielle Stowasser.

In addition, the NPS said that healthcare practitioners who are looking to use antidepressants in treating their patients, should consider the patient's previous experience with antidepressants, along with potential drug interactions and the likelihood of adverse events, such as weight gain, sexual dysfunction and gastrointestinal upset.

"It is particularly important to assess the balance of benefits and harms in older patients, since they experience adverse effects and drug interactions more frequently than younger patients," Stowasser said.

According to NPS, between one-third and one-half of patients prescribed an antidepressant discontinue within three months of starting treatment.

The major factors contributing to these discontinuations include: side effects, and a lack of understanding of depression as a condition and what to expect from treatment.

To remedy this, NPS suggests that healthcare professionals discuss

issues related to antidepressant therapy with their patients including: potential side effects, how long before the full benefit of treatment is likely to be experienced, likely duration of treatment, dangers of non-adherence and of stopping treatment abruptly, concerns about addiction, and interactions with over-the-counter medicines such as St John's Wort and many cough and cold medicines.

For more information see www.nps.org.au/conditions/depression.

Sleep apnea and cancer

A NEW study has found that sleep apnea is associated with an increased risk of cancer mortality.

Set to be published in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, the study looked at 22-year mortality data on 1,522 people who were enrolled in the Wisconsin Sleep Cohort study.

The participants in the study underwent overnight sleep studies that included all-night recording of sleep and breathing, as well as other tests at four-year intervals.

According to the study findings, people with severe sleep apnea were 4.8 times more likely to die from cancer.

"Clearly, there is a correlation, and we are a long way from proving that sleep apnea causes cancer or contributes to its growth," said study author Dr Javier Nieto, Chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"But animal studies have shown that the intermittent hypoxia (an inadequate supply of oxygen) that characterises sleep apnea promotes angiogenesis—increased vascular growth—and tumor growth," he added, referring to a separate study from researchers at the University of Barcelona, which found that inadequate levels of oxygen may increase the growth of tumours in mice.

DISPENSARY CORNER

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A truck packed to the brim with beer wreaked havoc on Polish traffic when its load spilled out over a busy roundabout.

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