

Quebec prescribing

PHARMACISTS in the Canadian province of Quebec have been granted permission to prescribe certain drugs and issue repeats, with the move effective 03 Sep.

However it's not clear how the prescribing will be reimbursed, with the govt currently negotiating with insurers and pharmacists.

Fee-help for PSA diploma

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has been granted approval to offer VET FEE-HELP for its newly accredited Graduate Diploma of Pharmacy Practice.

The move means that fees to undertake further study need no longer be a barrier for pharmacists and interns wanting to improve their management, business and professional skills, the PSA said.

PSA National President, Grant Kardachi, said the development was a reflection of PSA's "commitment to helping secure the future of the profession".

He said that interns can elect to enrol in four units of the Diploma and defer their entire course fee through VET FEE-HELP, which is a loan program to help eligible

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Three pages today

PHARMACY Daily today has two pages of the latest industry news, along with a full page promoting the opportunity for pharmacies to become a ParcelPoint collection office, where online shoppers can have their packages delivered and picked up at convenient times.

See **page three** for details.

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Epaned approval

THE US FDA has approved Epaned, a liquid form of Enalapril (enalapril maleate) for the treatment of hypertension in people one month of age and older.

BioCeuticals herbals

BIOCEUTICALS has launched a new 'Herbal Range,' comprising four products which feature clinically trialled ingredients.

Covering conditions including UTIs, insomnia and anxiety, blood glucose levels and allergies, the range utilises evidence-based standardised extracts where possible and contains no artificial colours, flavours or sweeteners.

The new products are Allergy Care, NuroBalance, UltraBiotic Urinary Care and GlucoFactors Forte.

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It's valid until May 2014 - see www.thelevinhotel.co.uk.

EXPEDITION cruise specialist Abercrombie & Kent is offering discounts of up to US\$3000 per couple on 2014 Arctic voyage bookings made by 30 Nov.

The cruises are on board the luxury *MV Le Boreal*, and include the 12 day *Polar Bears & Midnight Sun* trip departing 29 July 2014 from US\$9,995 per person, or the 15 day *Norway, Greenland & Iceland* trip from US\$13,495.

See your travel agent to book.

Report 'just plain wrong'

THE Pharmacy Guild says a *News Limited* story yesterday about a "secret additional charge" being imposed by pharmacists on PBS medications is "an outrageous slur

on Australia's 5,200 community pharmacies".

The report, by Sue Dunlevy, claimed consumers are "missing out" on PBS price cuts because of the charge which pharmacists can optionally apply if the cost of a drug is lower than the government mandated maximum allowable price.

"This is just plain wrong, and shows a deliberately misleading prejudice against community pharmacists who deliver vital professional services to millions of Australian health care consumers," the Guild said in a statement.

Rather than being a "secret additional charge" as described by Dunlevy, the fees charged are part of a system which has been in place for more than two decades.

"Pharmacists do not set the price of medicines," the Guild said, with the government-set pricing publicly available at www.pbs.gov.au showing the lawful maximum price that pharmacists can charge.

"Pharmacy is a highly regulated industry and this protects consumers," the Guild said, with the PBS ensuring that no matter where patients buy medicines the maximum price payable is the same.

SHPA Medication Review decision tree

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists' *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research* has simplified the process of deciding which public funded medication review service is best for patients.

Article author Karen O'Leary says clinical pharmacy services for outpatients are now included in the list of 'non-admitted' services able to be paid for through Activity Based Funding (ABF) as part of the National Health Reform Agreement effective from 01 Jul 2013.

Fully funded services now include provision of dose administration aids, funded by the Community Pharmacy Agreement (CPA) or Dept of Veterans Affairs; clinical interventions through community pharmacies (CPA); MedsCheck and Diabetes MedsCheck (CPA); RMMRs (CPA); HMRs (CPA); inpatient medication review (ABF); and non-admitted patient services, particularly 40.04 Clinical Pharmacy (funded by ABF).

The article provides a 'decision tree' which aims to maximise the use of available publicly funded programs and minimise patient costs by identifying the most cost-effective service for each patient.

CLICK HERE for details.

DISPENSARY CORNER

FORGET professional services - how about these US innovations to add value for pharmacy clients.

The giant Walgreens chain has introduced a range of enhancements at some stores, including Eyebrow Bars to sculpt unruly facial hair and even in-pharmacy baristas, to serve a tasty latte for customers as they wait for scripts.

One of the trendiest is located in Hollywood (where else?) and launched late last year complete with a juice bar, barista, a selection of more than 700 wines and even a sushi chef.

Rival group Rite Aid has introduced in-pharmacy video consultations with doctors, as well as some shops in a "wellness" format which offers organic soups, juices and pastas along with home fitness equipment such as yoga mats and dumbbells.

According to *Associated Press* the latest Walgreens innovation is humidors in some outlets, featuring an array of cigars.

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