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Tuesday 27 Aug 2013

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Free wound webinar

THE Australian Wound Management Association (AMWA) invites pharmacists and pharmacy assistants with an interest in wound care to a valuable educational webinar on Wednesday September 11th at 6.00 pm AEST.

The presenter is Associate Professor William McGuiness, president of the AMWA.

Prof McGuiness was recently an invited keynote speaker at the 2013 European Wound Management Conference held in Copenhagen.

His topic is *The Importance of Skin Integrity, and its Profound Impact*.

CLICK HERE for more details and to register for the online event.

CHF proffers olive branch

THE Consumers Health Forum (CHF) yesterday released an “open letter” to community pharmacists, saying that despite its concerted campaign against compensation for accelerated price disclosure it “recognises the integral role you play in healthcare and believe you deserve respect”.

The CHF, together with ACOSS and CHOICE, launched the *Stand Up For Cheaper Medicines* website (**PD 20 Aug**) in response to the industry-led “Save your local pharmacy” campaign, which has seen pharmacy staff gather thousands of signatures from their customers for a national petition.

The Forum says that it’s careful in its material to differentiate between the actions of pharmacy owners and pharmacists, “but the media often confuses the two”.

The open letter says the CHF believes that “indefensible, artificially high prices for medicines will damage the well-earned reputation of pharmacists and erode hard-won trust.”

“We also believe the best way to remunerate health providers for the provision of quality health services is to *pay them for the*

provision of quality health services,” the letter continues.

HOWEVER the Guild has leapt on the conciliatory nature of the CHF letter, saying it “only serves to emphasise the CHF’s lack of understanding of community pharmacy, the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme pricing arrangements”.

“The taxpayer-funded CHF has also lamely blamed the media for the adverse impact it has had on community pharmacy confidence and stability by spreading misinformation,” the Guild added.

The Guild says there are about 60,000 jobs in community pharmacy, including pharmacists and assistants, adding that it’s concerned about the impact of the latest PBS changes on all of these jobs, not to mention 8,000 students currently studying pharmacy.

“The CHF refuses to acknowledge that payments to community pharmacy through the PBS arrangements are not an ‘industry assistance package’ but an appropriate payment for millions of services provided through privately owned infrastructure requiring billions of dollars of investment by pharmacy owners,” the Guild said.

According to the Guild, pharmacies strongly support efforts to reduce the price of medicines, with the petition signed by many “real consumers in real pharmacies” over the last two weeks seeking “nothing more than a fair deal and an honoured Agreement”.

CLICK HERE to see the CHF letter.

Today’s issue of PD

PHARMACY Daily today has three pages of the latest pharmacy news plus a full page from API reminding pharmacists to order their 2014 API Calendars, which give a visible presence in your customer’s home - see **page four**.

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Chemmart & diabetes

CHEMMART Pharmacy is increasing efforts to help Australians detect and manage the risk of diabetes, in response to an alarming new study into the prevalence of the disease among Australian adults.

Following the release of the AusDiab 2012 report The Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study, published by Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute (**PD** 21 Aug), Chemmart is alerting customers to the range of services, including health checks and diabetes support, the pharmacy group offers to assist in proactive health management.

The report found that average Australian waist circumferences expanded by 5.3cm over the course of the study, with consequences including increased rates of diabetes, blood pressure, kidney disease and mortality.

Chemmart Pharmacy diabetes expert Kirrily Chambers said this showed the need for urgent action to tackle the problem.

"The results of the Baker IDI study underline the growing concerns that will significantly affect the future health of many Australians.

"More Australians are developing diabetes, with men experiencing a higher risk, and, as the study states, those with the condition are five times more likely to face considerable health implications as a result," Ms Chambers said.

"While these findings are extremely concerning, we hope that this can be the wakeup call many Australians need to encourage them to take greater responsibility for their health".

Diabetes funding urged

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and the Pharmacy Guild have both suggested an expanded role for pharmacists in diabetes care, as part of their responses to the government's consultation on the post-market review of products uses in the management of the condition.

The Department of Health and Ageing called for submissions earlier this year, with 25 responses now listed on the pbs.gov.au site.

The PSA document has urged exploration of mechanisms to fund "pharmacist-delivered medication management services..."

Screening promise

BOWEL Cancer Australia has welcomed a federal opposition commitment to boost the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program.

Medical guidelines recommend at least two yearly screening for people aged 50-74 but the current program falls short by offering screening to just four age groups at five yearly intervals.

The Coalition has embraced two of the three recommendations of the Bowel Cancer 2016 Challenge by its promise to reset the current program to two yearly screening intervals, in line with medical guidelines, as well as accelerate the inclusion of new age groups to the screening program.

Pharmacy has been one of the primary means of promoting the program and remains a key supporter - more info online at www.bowelcanceraustralia.org.

for consumers who are not eligible under the arrangements of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement".

And another suggestion from the PSA is the inclusion of an annual Home Medicines Review in a consumer's diabetes care plan, as a requirement for eligibility for continued subsidisation of an expensive PBS medicine.

The Guild's response makes a number of recommendations, including that pharmacists "should be better utilised and compensated for supporting measures to improve prescribing practices".

This could include developing the Diabetes MedsCheck services so that pharmacists have greater capacity to follow up on adherence issues for at-risk patients, as well as encouraging patients with chronic health conditions "educated and encouraged to select and use one preferred pharmacy".

Among other ideas, the Guild also urged a PBS-subsidised DAA service for at-risk patient groups.

CLICK HERE to see submissions.

Save the APP date

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is reminding the industry to save the date for its annual APP conference, which will take place 13-16 March 2014 at the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre.

The event will once again feature a comprehensive four-day educational program, an exciting social program and a trade exhibition showcasing the latest products, services and industry innovations.

Online registration will open in September, with earlybird rates available for confirmed bookings made through until 31 Jan.

Sessions will focus on planning for "fire, flood & flu", professional services and pharmacy assistants, connecting with customers and knowing your herbal medicines.

Free APP2014 full registrations (excluding gala dinner) are also available for pharmacists who send two or more staff to the Pharmacy Assistant National Conference on the Gold Coast from 17-19 Oct - see www.appconference.com.

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Guild Update

Maintain the pressure

We must not let up in our campaign to ensure that pharmacies are fairly paid for their critical role dispensing medicines to their patients.

This is likely to be a long campaign, which will probably continue well after the Federal election.

The Guild is pushing strongly with both Labor and the Coalition that the impact on pharmacies of the pre-election change to price disclosure must be recognised and fixed.

However, the reality is that both sides of politics are desperate for budget savings and are very reticent to make any financial commitments in the run-up to polling day.

Under Clause 30.1 of the Agreement, the Government must consult on this change so, regardless of who wins the election, we will be negotiating with them afterwards.

This makes it even more important that EVERY pharmacy in EVERY community continues to point out the impact on jobs and services and encourages as many patients as possible to sign the petition.

If ever pharmacists needed any extra motivation to get active and start campaigning for the future of community pharmacy, the disgraceful untruths being spread by the Consumers Health Forum (CHF) provide it.

We cannot let the CHF get away with continuing to mislead the public into believing that pharmacists are opposed to cheaper medicines. Fortunately, real consumers know the value of community pharmacy.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Smaller paracetamol packs

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has confirmed that the maximum paracetamol pack size to be sold in Australian retailers other than pharmacies will be cut from 25 to 20 tablets from 01 Sep.

The move follows changes to paracetamol scheduling which were decided upon in May 2012, and will be registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Incidents in the next few weeks, with the change to be fully implemented by the beginning of next month.

The move was made "after considering the risks of different pack sizes in Australia.

"It is expected that the decision will result in fewer people requiring medical intervention following a paracetamol overdose," the TGA said in a statement.

Paracetamol is unscheduled when sold in small pack sizes.

It will become illegal for any retailer other than a pharmacy (or licensed person authorised by their State or Territory) to sell paracetamol packs containing more than twenty 500 mg tablets/capsules/caplets on 01 Sep 2013.

The larger paracetamol pack sizes available in pharmacies will not change; however the TGA said that the smaller packs in pharmacies may contain 20 tablets rather than the current 24.

Currently about 8000 patients are treated in Australia every year for paracetamol overdose taken as deliberate self-harm, with the median amount taken in an overdose being 12g (one packet).

"The pack size seems to be linked to the amount of paracetamol consumed in an overdose," the TGA said, with the change therefore made on safety grounds.

Obesity & VTE - RGH

THE RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin this week highlights the link between obesity and issues around the management of Venous Thrombo-Embolicism (VTE).

Obesity is an independent risk for VTE, states the bulletin; patients being treated for VTE prophylaxis may require dosage adjustment of Clexane (enoxaparin).

CLICK HERE to access the Bulletin.



DISPENSARY CORNER

INTER-SPECIES blood transfusion has proven successful in a landmark operation where a dog has saved the life of a cat.

The miracle was performed by New Zealand vet Kate Heller, who was called in to rescue Rory the ginger tom who had become very ill after eating rat poison.

Heller said the "feeble feline was fading fast" as she frantically searched for a donor cat to provide an immediate transfusion.

However when no suitable moggy was available she decided to take a gamble and use dog's blood again, taking about 120ml from Macy, an 18 month-old Labrador.

When she transferred the life-saving fluid to the cat it started to recover within an hour.

Apparently cats do not have antibodies which reject dog blood, meaning transfusions can buy enough time for the cat to generate its own red blood cells.

THERE'S been a mass break-out of cockroaches from an "insect farm" in China which was breeding the creepy-crawlies for use in traditional remedies.

According to the *Modern Express* newspaper, at least one million roaches fled from the farm in Dafeng in the eastern province of Jiangsu after an "unknown perpetrator" damaged the special plastic greenhouse where they were being raised.

The cockroaches have flooded the surrounding cornfields, with pest control authorities sending a crack team to the area to come up with a plan to deal with the escapees.

The report said that traditional Chinese medicine includes a number of cockroach-based extracts which can treat a range of conditions including inflammation and cancer.

The farm had hatched more than 1.5 million roaches at the time of the escape, with hopes of making about 1,000 yuan (A\$200) for each kg sold.

WIN EYSILIX AND HYDRALURON

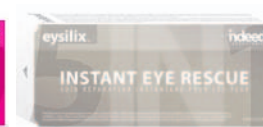
Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner of the prize pack, **Anika Jenke** from **Angaston Amcal Pharmacy**.

Pharmacy Daily had teamed up with **Indeed Labs** this week and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win the latest two products from their range.

New from Indeed labs! From the makers of award winning nanoblur, come two new products hydraluron and eysilix.

Hydraluron is a moisture booster with the purest form of hyaluronic acid for the ultimate in below the surface hydration. The result – better hydrated, moisture nourished, plumped up skin.

Eysilix contains 10 peptides and 40% active ingredients to stimulate, energize and hydrate for a smoother, firmer more rejuvenated looking eye area.



To win this great prize pack, be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below to:
comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

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