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## Price Disclosure info

THE Department of Health has released details of a presentation made at a stakeholder information session regarding the implementation of Simplified Price Disclosure held in Canberra last week - [CLICK HERE](#) to access.



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## Sigma-Alliance Boots pact

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has today launched an "exclusive product partnership" with UK pharmacy giant Alliance Boots, which will see the Boots Laboratories skincare portfolio available through Amcal, Amcal Max and Guardian pharmacies across Australia.

Sigma ceo Mark Hooper, who's pictured right with the company's chief operating officer Gary Dunne, told *PD* that the deal continues the company's push to support its pharmacy partners by investing in the retail brands to help combat the impact of PBS reform.

"This is a product that's exclusive to pharmacy with great margins," Hooper said, adding that it "demonstrates the leverage that Sigma can bring to the table" to access product not available to individual pharmacists.

He said the deal was the outcome of around two years of work, with Sigma evaluating the local brand recognition for Boots which enjoys a strong reputation for quality.

The products include Optiva, a "complete everyday skincare regime," Serum, targeting early signs of ageing, and Serum Lift, a



"complete anti-ageing regime to target deep lines and wrinkles".

The new product range, which is in store from today, will be promoted through radio, catalogue and in-store campaigns.

Hooper said that Sigma would explore further collaborations with Boots in the future.

MEANWHILE Hooper also said Sigma was continuing to feel the impacts of PBS reform, but this is being mitigated as pharmacies evolve their business to focus on new front-of-shop categories and away from the dispensary.

"There's no doubt the PBS is in negative territory," he said, with the company expecting this trend to continue into 2014.

Hooper said that issues faced by Sigma as a wholesaler are similar to those of its pharmacy customers, with PBS reform forcing it to diversify its income.

"If pharmacists grow their front of shop business so do we," he said.

## Co-payment increase

PRICES for prescriptions dispensed under the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme will increase on 01 Jan 2014, as part of the annual indexing process of patient co-payments.

Concessional patients will pay \$6 per script, while the general patient PBS cost will be \$36.90.

Safety net thresholds will change to \$360 for concessional patients and \$1421.20 for general patients, while dispensing fees will be \$6.63 (RP) and \$8.67 (EP).

The dangerous drug fee is \$2.71, while Safety Net recording fees for items priced below the general co-payment are \$1.13 (RP)/ \$1.48 (EP).

The allowable fee for items priced below the general co-payment will become \$4.19 and the fee to issue an Entitlement Card becomes \$9.26.

## PATY sponsorship

GUILDSUPER has been announced as the new major sponsor for the National Pharmacy Assistant of the Year award.

The Guild says the deal "offers an exciting opportunity to refocus and expand the award, bringing an even greater level of recognition to pharmacy assistants".

Details on nomination criteria and deadlines will be announced early in 2014, with Guild Financial Services executive gm Theresa Mills saying the partnership will help to recognise the vital health system role played by Australia's more than 35,000 pharmacy assistants.

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### Aspartame safe - EFSA

**THE** European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has completed a full risk assessment on artificial sweetener aspartame and concludes it is safe at current levels.

Available in Europe since the 1980's, aspartame has repeatedly come under challenge with stories around its potential as a carcinogen.

Since 2002, EFSA has kept the safety of aspartame under regular review and its Scientific Panels have issued several opinions on studies related to this sweetener, including this most recent exhaustive risk assessment of the compound which can be accessed by **CLICKING HERE**.

### New CPD e-module

**A NEW** e-learning module is now available from the Guild Pharmacy Academy.

The module titled '*BRILINTA (ticagrelor) – an anti-platelet agent for Acute Coronary Syndromes*' is supported by Astra Zeneca.

It has been CPD accredited for one Group 2 CPD credit and can be found in the '*Featured Courses*' area after logging in at:

[www.mycpd.org.au](http://www.mycpd.org.au)

## Australians want e-health

**GLOBAL** consulting and technology outsourcing firm Accenture has released the results of an international survey which found a large majority (78%) of Australian health patients want full access to their electronic medical records.

The reality however, is that the survey found only 22% of consumers currently have access.

Accenture surveyed more than 9,000 consumers including 1,002 Australians.

The findings are consistent with other research demonstrating only 18% of Australian doctors believe that patients should have full access to their own records.

Supporting the growing trend of patient engagement, nearly half of Australian consumers (47%) surveyed without online access to their medical records would be willing to switch doctors to gain access.

This percentage rises to 55% among consumers under 55 years in age without online access to their records.

"The health sector is developing

more advanced electronic capabilities to support clinical decision-making and more integrated care," said Leigh Donoghue, managing director of Accenture's health business in Australia.

"Consumer engagement is a part of this, but not necessarily a primary driver.

"This may need rethinking in light of the considerable gap between doctor and consumer attitudes towards electronic access to medical records, particularly for younger, technology-savvy consumers."

"It is essential that we find a way to balance the legitimate needs and concerns of Australian doctors with the rising needs and expectations of consumers in a digital age," he highlighted.

"More must be done to enable consumers to play an active role in their own care."

The patient survey also revealed the majority of Australian patients (60%) do not actively track aspects of their health, such as health indicators, health history and physical activity.

This compares poorly with a 48% average across the eight other countries in the survey which included Brazil, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Singapore and the USA.

### IMS acquires Pygargus

**MEDICAL** data specialist IMS Health has acquired Pygargus, a Swedish "industry-leading life sciences advisory and analytics firm," to further advance its technology-enabled Real-World Evidence (RWE) solutions offering.

"Life sciences organisations today recognise the transformative role of real-world insights in driving a deeper understanding of the end-to-end patient journey," said Jon Resnick, vice president of IMS' RWE Solutions division.

He said the deal would provide more options to help healthcare decision makers identify, link and interpret real-world outcomes in "near real time".

### Generic prices inflate

**THE** USA's National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) has surveyed more than 1,000 community pharmacists and found a spike in the cost of generic medicines across the board.

NCPA ceo B. Douglas Hoey said that the cost price of "more and more generic drugs are rising in rapid, breathtaking fashion" having a negative impact on a number of patients.

The price rises have been reported in a number of pharmacy media outlets in the US recently.

For more information **CLICK HERE**.



### DISPENSARY CORNER

**AUTHORITIES** in the European Union have confirmed plans to fund a range of high-tech sensors which target obesity, as part of an initiative to use technology for preventative healthcare.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Anastasios Delopoulos from the University of Thessaloniki in Greece, who said it would investigate ways to help prevent obesity and eating disorders, according to the BBC.

Gadgets, which will be tested on school children in Sweden and the Netherlands, include a system which actively measures the weight of a plate of food during a meal to determine how quickly it's being eaten.

If a diner is gobbling too quickly for them to realise when they are getting full they are alerted to slow down via a smartphone app.

Other sensors to be used in the trial include a wearable device with an accelerometer to measure physical activity, giving the user a "smiley face" when they've done enough moving.

And a third gadget to be used is an acoustic sensor which records and analyses data on how the user chews food.

Initially just collecting data, in later stages of the project the system will be used to help change the way at-risk children eat and exercise, the report says.

## WIN A BIO-OIL MINI SPA PACK

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a **Bio-Oil Mini Spa Pack** valued at \$50.

Despite being well known for its ability to help reduce the visible appearance of scars and stretch marks, Bio-Oil has a myriad of other skin-loving uses. Featuring a combination of plant oils (Calendula, Rosemary, Lavender and Chamomile) as well as Vitamins A and E, Bio-Oil helps promote healthy skin, smoothes and tones ageing skin and helps to combat dehydrated skin. Massage into the tops of the feet and the legs as part of a memorable at-home mini spa treatment.

For more info go to <http://www.bio-oil.com/en-us>.

For your chance to win this great prize pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below.



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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Kathleen Moorby** from **The Pharmacy Guild of Australia**.