



Phone flood update

AS at 6pm EDST on Monday 28 January 2013 it is understood that Telstra telecommunications North of Gladstone are inoperable.

Any approved pharmacist using Telstra for connection to PBS Online will not have real-time connection to DHS-Medicare for prescription verification and entitlement checking, however this service interruption will not affect PBS claims as dispensing software will store all claimed items until connection is restored.



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The Electronic Transfer of Prescription Education Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing as part of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement between the Commonwealth and The Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Queensland flood advice

PHARMACISTS in flood affected areas of Queensland are being advised that patients can receive a three day supply of medication without a prescription, in accordance with state emergency supply provisions.

The advice, issued by the Department of Health and Ageing for approved pharmacists supplying PBS medicines to patients in areas affected by the Qld floods, also noted that if a patient does not have their Medicare, DVA or Centrelink card the pharmacist should ring the usual PBS Inquiry line 132 290 (press option 1), for assistance with a patient's Medicare or concessional details.

The pharmacist can also dispense using the 'owning prescription provision', meaning that the pharmacist can confirm the patient's current medication details with the prescriber, or a prescriber may direct a pharmacist to supply a medicine to a patient in an emergency situation.

In addition, patients may be issued the amount authorised by the prescriber, or up to one month's supply if no quantity is specified.

Moreover the prescriber is required to forward a paper prescription to the pharmacy to cover the emergency supply as soon as practicable, in accordance with state law.

A pharmacy can also endorse prescription as 'immediate supply necessary', if the medicine is required within 4/20 day rule, meaning that the pharmacist may provide another supply, but must endorse the prescription with the words 'immediate supply necessary' and sign the PBS prescription.

The Department of Health has also advised that pharmacists seeking to temporarily relocate

their approved pharmacy due to damage from widespread flooding across Queensland should send an email to DHS-Medicare pbs.approval.enquiries@humanservices.gov.au, quoting the name of the pharmacy, their current PBS approval number, current address of premises, and proposed address of premises, and expected timeframe for return to the approved premises.

In most instances, the Australian Community Pharmacy Authority will fast track these requests for temporary relocation within 24 hours, whilst the Department of Health and Ageing will advise wholesaler distributors of the temporary approval of the new premises, to facilitate delivery of PBS medicines to the new address.

In addition, pharmacies that have lost or damaged paperwork due to the flooding can submit a Statutory Declaration to Medicare, including a statement about loss of paperwork as a result of the natural disaster/emergency, and an undertaking that if the paperwork is found it will be forwarded to Medicare and that an insurance claim has not been made.

Stat Decs can be downloaded at www.ag.gov.au/statdec.

Long naps not necessary

NOT getting a full 8 hours of sleep a night may not be that much of an issue according to researchers at the University of Sydney.

The comments are based on a study which showed that sleep duration naturally waxes and wanes over a period of days regardless of individual lifestyle, timing of sleep or waking, and social and environmental influences.

The study monitored a group of healthy young males over 14 nights using an actigraph designed to measure sleep patterns.

The actigraph data showed participants' sleep duration oscillated in a sine wave pattern.

The researchers noted clear periodic patterns in the majority of the participants, varying from periods of between two and 18 days.

The cyclic pattern observed in the research suggests that the sleep balance mechanism operates on an ongoing basis in daily life, with changes in sleep duration constantly accompanied by compensatory adjustments.

"Sleep requirements vary in a cyclical fashion and between individuals," said study head Dr Chin Moi Chow.

"If you incur a sleep debt, your body will signal a need to catch up on extra sleep," Chow added.

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Guild Update

The Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP) has emerged as a major success story for community pharmacy.

Electronic prescription systems have now been adopted by over two-thirds of Australian pharmacies - a significant take up rate which reflects very well on the capacity of pharmacy to get involved in technological advances which add real value and benefit for patients.

eRx Script Exchange is a Prescription Exchange Service that has been operating for three and a half years. Over this time, 3,300 pharmacies and 14,000 doctors have used eRx.

ETP offers many benefits to the daily processes in pharmacy.

Firstly, and most importantly, the dispensing process is made safer with automated matching and pre-filling of all fields as provided by the doctor (or previous pharmacy for repeats).

Secondly, the dispensing process is generally more efficient, as data is pre-filled in the dispensary system.

In addition to these benefits, the use of ETP will enable other eHealth initiatives to become a reality.

While over two thirds of pharmacies are already involved, there are still many pharmacies which are yet to get on board this quiet revolution.

The case for moving to electronic prescriptions is extremely strong, both in clinical and business terms.

Patient safety, minimisation of dispense errors, business efficiency, and systemised retention of data are the major areas of benefit.

While it is acknowledged that many community pharmacies are doing it tough in the current economic conditions - especially with further PBS Reform price cuts coming in April - it still makes good business sense to make the small investment required to upgrade to electronic prescriptions.

There is no net ongoing cost to use eRx, and the whole billing process can easily be automated.

It's an investment for the long term. The Guild believes every pharmacy should be on board with eRx Script Exchange.

See www.erx.com.au, call 1300 700 921, or email support@erx.com.au.



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CHC calls for meaningful plan

THE Government and industry need to get their acts together and develop a meaningful plan and framework for complementary medicines, according to the Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC).

The comments follow the CHC's 2013/14 pre-Budget submission to the Government which calls for \$500,000 over two years to develop an industry-wide plan using a model similar to the Manufacturing Roundtable process.

"It would include a Planning Task Force involving the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), CHC, Dept. Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRT), and other key industry stakeholders", said CHC Executive Director, Dr Wendy Morrow.

"Industry and government need to develop a meaningful plan and framework, that moves away from a one size fits all regulatory approach to one that recognises the differences between complementary and prescriptions medicines, respectively," Morrow added.

According to the CHC, features of the plan should include: modified

product registration pathway to incentivise research and innovation; mechanisms to facilitate market exclusivity for a period of time to encourage innovation and support ongoing clinical trials; and mutual recognition with comparable overseas regulators.

The CHC believes the plan should also include an equitable proportion of NHMRC funding allocated for complementary medicines research, and government recognition and specific support for complementary medicines export development and import replacement.

Meanwhile recommendations in the CHC's pre-Budget submission include \$1m over two years to assist the TGA to implement regulatory reforms; \$500,000 over two years to develop a complementary medicines industry-wide plan; and \$400,000 over two years to overcome barriers to complementary medicines innovation.

The submission also calls for \$700,000 over three years to bring evidence-based Indigenous medicines to market and \$800,000 over two years to undertake a stock-take of Indigenous medicines.

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Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win **Michel Mercier's** Brushes Pack.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

NATURE'S wonders.

Researchers at Johannesburg's Wits University have discovered that there is more to the humble dung beetle than meets the eye.

The study began with scientists aiming to crack the mystery as to why the beetles did a little dance on top of their dung ball at night before beginning to roll it away, and why, even in the darkness, the beetles walk in a straight line.

During the research, it was discovered that the beetles use the Milky Way galaxy to navigate.

The scientists tested the theory by putting the beetles in the university planetarium, devoid of Milky Way, and discovered, that without the galaxy in the sky, the beetles got lost.



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