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New health.gov.au

THE newly renamed Department of Health has a new website, with the refreshed portal promising many improvements including accessibility fixes and a new contemporary design which will work better on phones and tablets.

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Offering a sustainable growth solution

Pharmacy is the solution

A MAJOR new report into GP shortages in rural Australia has urged a significantly expanded professional role for pharmacists, as well as a "viable, cost-effective remuneration model" for new pharmacist-provided services.

Produced by independent public policy think-tank The Grattan Institute, the "Access All Areas" report states that "the first step is to make much better use of pharmacists' skills.

"Pharmacists are highly trained, have deep expertise in medicines, and are located in communities throughout Australia.

"But their role is far more limited in Australia than in many other countries," the report says.

Measures suggested, which would only apply in the seven rural areas with the worst shortages of GP services, include the provision by pharmacists of repeat prescriptions to people with simple, stable conditions.

Pharmacists should also be able to provide vaccinations, and to work with GPs to help patients manage chronic conditions, the report adds.

However the reforms would require changes to the way that pharmacists are paid, with a 'blended' payment approach proposed in which pharmacists providing repeats would receive 50% of the Medicare fee normally provided to GPs for a Type A consultation.

For chronic care the report suggests a payment model where

pharmacists would receive a fixed amount per patient per year, as well as a small amount each time they saw that patient.

Pharmacy Guild National President, Kos Sclavos, said the Guild particularly welcomed the acknowledgement that pharmacists should play an expanded role in immunisation.

"Currently Australia is one of the few Western jurisdictions that does not have a program for pharmacists to play this role," Sclavos said.

He said proposed reimbursement via the Medical Benefits Schedule would also see the service provided in a professional environment and that the information would be recorded on patient health records.

The report also acknowledges that there is workforce capacity for pharmacists to take on these expanded roles, with the recent expansion in pharmacy schools and graduate numbers.

"The Grattan Institute is right - it is time for Australian patients to benefit from the increased and optimal use of the expertise and availability of community pharmacists," Sclavos said.

CLICK HERE to view the report.

PAC13 offers VIP pass

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has announced that one lucky three-day delegate to its upcoming PAC13 conference in Brisbane will win a full VIP pass.

Valued at more than \$2,000, the pass is in addition to the free seven-inch tablet they receive for registering for the three days of Australia's premier pharmacy conference.

PSA Chief Executive Officer Liesel Wett said "This is a really exciting competition, and one which offers the winner so much to add to the already great PAC experience."

The prize includes a VIP pass to all conference social events, and to top it all off the winner will also receive a voucher for \$500 to cover travel or other expenses.

"And when the business and fun of PAC is all over, they will take home a \$500 PSA education voucher to put towards ongoing professional development... which is mandatory for continuing registration," Wett said

PAC13 will be held from 10-13 October 2013 - to register, go to psa.org.au/pac.

Entering is easy: Full registrants simply need to email the theme of PAC13 to pac.13@psa.org.au.

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Cervarix clarification

THE UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has issued a formal statement saying that it's found no evidence of a link between HPV vaccine Cervarix and chronic fatigue syndrome.

MHRA scientists analysed patient record data from the 'Clinical Practice Research Datalink,' and found no difference in the frequency of fatigue syndromes in young women before and after the start of Britain's 2008-2012 national HPV vaccination program.

PBS spending declining

MEDICINES Australia has hailed the government's Final Budget Outcome 2012-13 statement which was released on Friday, saying that the figures confirm that "spending on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is going backwards".

According to MA ceo Brendan Shaw, government spending on medicines last financial year was \$857 lower than the amount estimated in the May budget.

In the papers, Treasury said that the reduction in spending is due to the "greater than expected impact of price disclosure and cost-sharing arrangements".

Shaw said that the result shows that the savings from price disclosure are now "coming by the truckload," and said that the huge cuts to PBS spending "have come at a time when more and more medicines are facing a logjam in the

listing process, patients are waiting for new therapies, and the PBS has seen the lowest number of new molecules listed in 20 years.

"It's imperative that the savings coming from price disclosure be used to speed up the listing of new medicines for the community," Shaw urged.

He said that the medicines industry looks forward to working with the new government "to ensure that the process of listing new medicines is efficient and that the substantial savings from price reductions are invested in new therapies for the Australian community".

Supermarket target

AUSTRALIA'S supermarket giants may be considering expanding into pharmacy, according to a report in Saturday's *Fairfax* newspapers.

The story cited marketing lecturer Peter McDonald from Sydney University who said that pharmacy had "classic characteristics" that would appeal to the grocery groups.

Both supermarket operators have said they have no plans to expand into pharmacy, while the Guild said such a move would be a "serious backward step".

"We don't think Australian consumers will march in the street urging more market power for Coles and Woolworths," according to Guild spokesman Greg Turnbull.

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SMS away diabetes

MOBILE phone messaging has been found to be effective in reducing the incidence of diabetes in men, in a fascinating study reported this month in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*.

In the study, 537 patients at risk of diabetes (working Indian men aged 35-55 years with impaired glucose tolerance) were randomly assigned to either the SMS intervention group or the standard care group.

Over a three year period the SMS group were regularly sent messages about healthy lifestyle options reminding them to eat well and exercise - and it appears to have worked, with 18% of the intervention group developing diabetes, in contrast to 27% of the standard care group.

The project was funded by the World Diabetes Foundation.

Dream Pharmacy Job

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Heidi Dariz, General Manager at Raven's Recruitment.**



Top 5 Job Interview Tips

Congratulations! You have secured a face to face interview with a potential new employer. So what do you need to do? These handy hints will help you leave a lasting impression:

- **Do your research:** Find out about the Pharmacy you want to work for. Make sure you understand the position you are applying for, the team environment and the organisation so you can converse with confidence.
- **Practice your answers:** There are some questions that you can almost guarantee will crop up. You should prepare answers to some of the most common interview questions about your strengths and weaknesses, as well as being able to explain why you would be the best person for the job.
- **Dress for success:** In an interview, first impressions do matter. The best way to ensure a good first impression is to dress professionally - good personal hygiene is also important.
- **Remain Calm:** Ensure you have the correct address and time of the interview, as well as the full name and position of the person/s that will be interviewing you. On the day, turn up 5-10 minutes prior to the interview. Remember to speak clearly, smile and keep in mind that your interviewers may be nervous too.
- **Ask Questions:** You should always have some questions for your interviewer to demonstrate your interest in the position. Prepare some which will give you more information about the job, and some which delve deeper into their culture and goals.

Chemmart's wall is a winner

CHEMMART'S Interactive Natural Medicines Wall (pictured at right) was another big winner at last week's POPAI Marketing at Retail Awards, joining the Nature's Own Pharmacy

Shopper Solutions unit in a podium finish in two key categories (**PD Fri**).

The Chemmart wall won Gold in the Beauty & Professional Health Care Category, as well as Silver in the Digital & Interactive Solutions Category.

The unit was developed by Chemmart in partnership with Sumo Visual Group, with the aim of reducing confusion among shoppers for vitamins and minerals which sometimes results in lost sales as they bypass the aisle.

A case study about the unit details two types of shoppers who found it difficult to find the right product: those who knew what they wanted but couldn't locate it on the shelves, and those who



understand their health problem but don't know what to buy.

The interactive Natural Medicines Wall incorporates a touch screen which allows customers to browse for a product by condition or brand, and once selected an LED light flashes on the shelves where the suitable item is located.

The system also tracks and reports on every screen touch, enabling reporting of consumer behaviour by product, brand and session to provide powerful analytics.

The success of the interactive wall has seen Chemmart plan to roll the system out across Australia "to assist shoppers in finding the right vitamin in an easy and interactive manner".

Win a Nature's Treats Gift Box from Burt's Bees

Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with **Burt's Bees** this week and is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win a Nature's Treats Gift Box.

Treat your skin from head to toes with nature's best ingredients. Gift box contains: Lemon Butter Cuticle Crème 17g, Shea Butter Hand Cream 50g, Nourishing Milk & Honey Body Lotion 70g, Acai Berry Lip Balm 4.25g.

With Burt's Bees, what you see is what you get. To us, the word "natural" means only one thing. It means "harvested from nature." And that is what we are. This selection of products contains the best natural ingredients to hydrate and nourish your lips, hands & body.

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

What benefits will regular use of Lemon Butter Cuticle Cream bring you?



DISPENSARY CORNER

MAYBE they were too busy training to brush or floss?

Around 20% of athletes competing at last year's London Olympic Games had bad teeth, according to a study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Scientists from the University College London studied data on the competitors, and said that "for a similar age profile, the oral health of athletes is poor".

Lead researcher Professor Ian Needleman cited a range of factors including regular ingestion of sugary energy drinks, stress on the immune system from intense training as well as a "fixation on training, preparation and other aspects of health [which] may leave little time or awareness of oral health".

The data was gathered from athletes who attended a free dental clinic at London 2012, which offered check-ups and mouth guards.

"Of the 302 athletes examined, from 25 sports, 55% had evidence of cavities, 45% had tooth erosion and 76% had gum disease," the BBC reported.

IMAGINE dispensing this.

Researchers from Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, USA, say that "bottled bowel mucus" could one day be used as a treatment for some gastrointestinal diseases.

The team have been looking at why the bowel lining doesn't react to bacteria living in the intestine, and found that bowel mucus acted as a barrier and also helped to calm the immune response.

Dr Andrea Cerutti said the scientists were able to show that glycans (or sugars) attached to a mucus protein called MUC2 was the key dampener.

Although the research is at very early stages, they postulated that one day it could be possible to create artificial mucus to treat some chronic bowel diseases.