

LOVE IT

“I LOVE eRx Express. I am having lots of fun with it!! Have just had my 83 year old customer send me her 7 scripts from her iPhone!”

Fiona Wailes, Kofoeds Pharmacy

New MS therapy

LEMTRADA (alemtuzumab) is now registered for treatment of active relapsing Multiple Sclerosis (MS) by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

While the drug is not yet available in Australia, with timelines for availability to be confirmed, the registration was a welcome step in making the treatment available, MS Research Australia chairman of research Professor Bill Carroll said.

Swisse funds CM study

HEALTH group Swisse will fund the founding of a Complementary Medicine Evidence Centre (CMEC) at La Trobe University, to the tune of \$15 million over six years.

Deputy vice chancellor Professor Nugent said the CMEC would build on the existing body of analytical and clinical research work to provide independent, rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific research and trials, publish data through industry-funded trials in peer reviewed journals and collaborate with other universities, business and government departments.

“Discussions are under way with a number of other complementary medicine companies, nutraceuticals, nutritional supplement companies and government to participate in the CMEC initiative.”

The Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC) ceo Carl Gibson said a viable complementary medicines industry was dependent on research to support quality, safety, efficacy and cost effectiveness.

CHC calls for change

THE Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC) has made its pre-Budget Submission, calling for a model that moves away from treating people after they become unwell to a “wellness” model that promotes wellbeing focussing on preventative health.

The pre-budget submission has three recommendations: a ‘light touch/right touch’ regulatory environment, support of complementary medicine research and the formation of an industry taskforce to look at ways to allow data protection and market exclusivity for complementary medicines.

The submission also seeks further complementary medicine research funding from the National Health and Medicine Research Council (NHMRC).

The recommendations include a review of regulatory reforms, to reduce redundant or overly burdensome regulatory requirements and a streamlined process for approval of new ingredients, with fast tracking for ingredients already assessed by countries with similar regulatory

requirements.

Costs for the recommendations varied, from reallocation of existing resources, to costs absorbed by the industry, to \$300,000 a year from 2014-2016 for research organisations to do a stock-take of specific indigenous medicines, in consultation with traditional owners.

CHC ceo Carl Gibson said current health policy in Australia focused on the treatment of people after they became unwell.

“This is costly in monetary terms and in terms of the impact on productivity and quality of life.”

“Cooperation and collaboration between policy makers, industry, health professionals and researchers is vital to ensuring that complementary medicines fulfil their potential of contributing to the overall health of all Australians.”

CLICK HERE for the Submission.

RGH E-Bulletin

THE latest RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin has been posted.

The release discusses hypomagnesaemia and proton pump inhibitors.

To access the E-Bulletin, **CLICK HERE**.

Cancer No.1 killer

A NEW report released for World Cancer Day today found that cancer was the biggest cause of death globally, at 8.2m deaths from 2012 and rising.

The *World Cancer Report* has been released by the UN's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and predicts that cancer incidence will increase by 75% over the next 20 years, reaching close to 25m cases a year in 2025.

Cancer Council Australia spokesman Terry Slevin said reasons for the increase varied between countries, with Australia third in the world for highest cancer incidence rates behind Denmark and France.

“Extended life expectancy in the developing world is also increasing cancer rates globally.

“Unfortunately, developing countries are also adopting the worst of our Western lifestyle, such as smoking, poor diet and inactivity, which is significantly contributing to global cancer prevalence.”

Slevin said there was a lot of misinformation about cancer and to help people separate scientific fact from fiction, the Cancer Council created the *iheard* mobile app, available on Android and iOS.

To read the report, **CLICK HERE**.

PBS changes

TWO new items have been listed as exempt from Statutory Price Reductions as of 01 Feb on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme's (PBS) website.

These are azithromycin (powder for oral suspension 200mg as dihydrate per 5ml, 15ml) and hydrocortisone (4mg tablet).



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Tassie pharmacy vax?

THE Tasmanian branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia is in talks with health department officials as to the possibility of pharmacists performing vaccinations in Tasmania.

PSA Tasmanian branch president Dr Shane Jackson sent out a message to members this week, letting them know about the meetings.

Dr Jackson said he was "very positive" about Tasmanian pharmacists performing vaccinations in the near future, but that there had been no firm commitment from government or health officials as yet.

Ideally, Dr Jackson said the PSA would like to see the director of public health approve a pharmacist training programme in line with those of other vaccinating health professionals this year, in order for pharmacists to be ready to vaccinate in the 2015 'flu season.

Pharmacy vaccinations continue to be a hot topic (see **PD** 14 Jan).

Govt to recover overpays

THE Department of Human Services has warned that payments to pharmacies who made multiple claims for supplying a Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicine will be recovered.

The department said it had found that some pharmacies were claiming more than once for supplying a PBS medicine, which could happen in a variety of ways, including submitting the electronic claim with a missing paper claim which would later be found and reclaimed.

Another possibility is that a pharmacist supplies a prescription for the same medicine, for the same patient prescribed on the same day, such prescriptions being invalid.

Pharmacists claiming more than once for the same prescription is a key focus of the department's health professional Compliance Program, it has warned.

"If your pharmacy claims, and is paid, for supplying the same prescription more than once, we

will recover these payments."

The department's examples suggest that the majority of multiple claims could be unintentional.

2013 strong for novels

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had a strong 2013 for approvals of novel drugs, with 27 new molecular entities (NMEs) approved.

This was about right for the average of 26 approvals per year since the beginning of this decade, FD Center for Drug Evaluation and Research Office of New Drugs director John K. Jenkins said.

However, more important was the quality of the drugs approved, and the roles many of them could serve.

"We now have new safe and effective treatments for a wide range of serious medical conditions, such as late-stage breast cancer, chronic hepatitis C...and many more."

Highlights included that one third of approved NMEs were "first-in-class."

TGA pilots software

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has launched a pilot project to develop a web service for medical software vendors wanting to integrate adverse event reporting and is inviting vendors to participate.

It was expected to run until April and would be free to vendors after completion, available on mobile and desktop, the TGA said.

The TGA said feedback had indicated that time required was a significant barrier to reporting by healthcare professionals.

"Providing an adverse event reporting mechanism in medical software, particularly one that allows reports to be automatically populated from clinical record data, has been suggested as a way of reducing the time required to find, complete and send reporting forms."

Hospital ID protocol

A CASE report from Austin Health has highlighted the need for clear hospital protocols to treat patients arriving in Australia from overseas who have been infected by bacteria resistant to multiple drugs.

Led by Infectious Diseases physician Dr Benjamin Howden, the group presented a case study, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, of a 66 year old man admitted to hospital after 93 days in various hospitals in Greece, suffering from a pelvic abscess resulting in diverticulitis and perforation of the colon.

Resistant organisms isolated from the infected sites included two gram-negative organisms, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, "requiring 'last line of defence' antibiotics."

The report urged hospitals to have management protocols in place to prevent spread of MDR organisms.

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TGA safety update

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has posted a Medicines Safety Update on its website referring especially to Quetiapine side effects and restrictions on the use of bioCSL Fluvax; **CLICK HERE** for details.

Guild Update

What is your story?

Australian community pharmacies are ever-changing, fast-paced environments full of great stories waiting to be told. Now the Guild is offering chance for pharmacists and pharmacy staff to share your great stories!

Currently, the Guild is promoting the value of community pharmacy and looking for great candidates that illustrate the hard work done by this incredible healthcare profession.

Sometimes when we work every day in an industry, we assume everybody knows about what we do and why. In fact, there is quite a low level of knowledge about the services provided by a modern community pharmacy.

The Guild regards the lifting of the perception of community pharmacy as a valued part of the health system as a major priority of our advocacy work, particularly in the lead up to the next Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Your story could be about going above and beyond to help a patient, an innovative service that you offer, or anything special about your pharmacy that you'd like to share with Australia

If you have an interesting story that you would like to share with us, please email it to Natalia Webster at natalia.webster@guild.org.au or phone 02 6270 1826.



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

NAPSA's golden eve



THE National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) finished its annual congress with a 'touch of gold' themed ball and \$5,000 raised for charity.

The Gala Ball was held at the Bendigo Town Hall and delegates united to support the South Australian Pharmacy Students' Association's (SAPSA) efforts to raise money for the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF), raising more than \$5,000 on the evening, bringing the total to \$6,254.

Jamie Pisani of Charles Sturt University won the Pharmacy of the Year NAPSA wild card round, going on to compete against the other state finalists for the overall

title at the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Pharmacy Australia Congress in October.

NAPSA president Xavier Agostino said he was impressed at how well the delegates were educated about and thoroughly debated the major issues facing the pharmacy profession, such as accelerated price disclosure and the administration of vaccinations in community pharmacy.

Around 250 delegates attended the annual event.

The 2015 NAPSA Congress will be held on the Gold Coast in January.

To sponsor or contribute to the Congress next year, email secretary@napsa.org.au.

WIN A derma e PACK

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a **derma e** pack, valued at \$43.90 each.

Known as the "Skin Vitamin", Vitamin E is peerless at rehydrating and nourishing even the driest, most severely cracked skin. **derma e** uses potent amounts of high quality Vitamin E in its Vitamin E Moisturising Crème and Skin Oil. The Skin Oil is fantastic for scars, stretch marks and ageing skin. Both products can be used on the face and body.

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True or false? **derma e** Vitamin E Crème and Oil can be used on the face and body.

Send your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Katy Duldig** from **The Pharmacy Guild of Australia**. Yesterday's answer was: 12,000 IU.

DISPENSARY CORNER

MONEY for old...money.

If a customer hands you a one cent coin, it may just pay to hold onto the relic.

Californian real estate agent Randy Lawrence inherited a silver-coloured penny from his father and kept it for more than 30 years before selling it to a coin shop, *KFMB Channel 8 News* reported.

After some research the owner, Michael McConnell, found it was a never-before-seen 1974-D aluminium penny from Denver Mint, the *Union-Tribune* reported.

McConnell, being a Good Sort, told Lawrence that he'd paid too little for the coin and the pair now intend to split the money from auction, which Lawrence said he'd heard could be up to US\$2 million, as well as donating up to US\$100,000 to local homeless programs.

THAT'LL do.

If you've ever ordered a sign for your pharmacy, you'll know the anxiety of triple checking your grammar and spelling, something Cambridge City Council in the UK ought to have had.

Worts' Causeway now has three road signs on the same street - with three different spellings.

The signs read Worts, Worts' and Wort's, with the council claiming all three have appeared in the history of the road, the *Telegraph* reported.

However the council has dropped apostrophes from all signage following national guidance that warned punctuation could confuse emergency services, the publication reported.

OUT of his tree.

It's February, so the Christmas decorations are well and truly off.

But a town in Northumberland has to keep its Christmas tree up, because a bird's nest was discovered in the branches, the *Telegraph* reported.

However locals seem delighted.