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INNER HEALTH PLUS

Labor's PBS raise

A PROPOSAL was drafted by Health Department officials in the lead up to the 2013 federal budget which floated the idea of increasing the co-payment for concession cardholders' medicine subsidised by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

The *Sunday Telegraph* reported Labor health spokeswoman Catherine King confirmed Labor rejected the plan, which looked to increase the co-payment from \$6 to \$12.70 to save taxpayers' money.

King urged the Abbott government to reject any revival of the plan, the *Sunday Telegraph* reported.

ACPM appointments

THE TGA has announced the appointees to the Advisory Committee on Prescription Medicines (ACPM).

Chaired by clinical associate professor Geoffrey Herkes, Head of Department of Neurology, Royal North Shore Hospital Sydney, some 30 specialists in their field will advise the TGA on matters relating to inclusions, changes and removals of prescription medicines on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Pharmacy groups sign up

THE Chemmart, PharmaSave and Terry White Chemists groups are among 1095 pharmacies which have signed up to the medAdvisor program.

The program helped patients manage medications and treatment plans and was available on smart phones, tablets and browsers, Actavis said.

It was launched in October and the pharmacies would support the free program in specific stores, making patients aware of its uses.

Actavis estimated that one in five pharmacies had signed up, based on 5000 pharmacies in Australia.

It aimed to address medicine non-adherence, it said.

MedAdvisor had partnered with GuildLink to offer the program through the pharmacy professional services platform GuildCare.

GuildLink ceo Ross Gallagher said the program complemented community pharmacy services and helped pharmacists and patients work together towards adherence.

"MedAdvisor patients can take charge of managing their own medications, while remaining in regular contact with their pharmacy."

Actavis sales director Adam

Dubrich said the partnerships were the tip of the iceberg.

"We are focused on creating more partnerships so we can provide all Australians, irrespective of their location, with access to free and easy-to-use technology that will benefit their health."

SHPA on RMMR, HMR

Debbie Rigby, Chair of the SHPA Accredited Pharmacist Reference Group said medication reviews by accredited pharmacists deliver great benefits to consumers, reduce medicine-related hospital admissions and reduce unnecessary use of medicines.

Rigby was responding to reports in *The Age* and *SMH* that referred to Amanda Vanstone's reference to a resident of an aged-care facility being prescribed medications that she did not require.

'Eye care' cancelled

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has advised that the 'Eye care in pharmacy' CPD events in Traralgon on 10 Feb and Shepparton on 11 Feb have been cancelled due to the Victorian bushfire emergency.

CM users healthier?

A REVIEW in *Nutrition Journal* has found that overall, dietary supplement users sought wellness and were consciously adopting a variety of lifestyle habits that they considered to contribute to healthy living.

'Health habits and other characteristics of dietary supplement users: A review' was welcomed by the Australian Self Medication Industry, which said the research echoed Australian findings which indicated that complementary medicines users exhibited healthier lifestyles.

The review looked at data from journal articles in the US, including the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys.

It found that dietary supplement use was often associated with other healthy habits, including a better diet, physical exercise and avoiding smoking.

Referencing ABS data, ASMI said this result was consistent with the Australian scene.

Competing interests in the review included that both authors were involved with the Council for Responsible Nutrition and the council's foundation provided funds to support preparation of the article.

To read the review, [CLICK HERE](#).

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Chemsave recruits

CHEMSAVE is recruiting new members with promotion which offers up to \$500,000 worth of overseas flights as incentives.

Pharmacies who join Chemsave will receive two free business or economy class return flights to one of 12 destinations of their choice, including Paris, London, Amsterdam, Beijing and Tokyo, the organisation said.

The offer is open to up to 25 new Chemsave members.

The group already has 110 members in Australia and has recruited an average of 24 members a year, it said.

Chemsave ceo and founder Michael Dixon said while the company didn't expect pharmacies to join solely for the flights, he hoped it would help them make the right choice when joining a pharmacy banner group.

Decrease in prescribing

NPS MedicineWise found there had been "improvements in appropriate prescribing" in the 2012/2013 financial year.

As part of its Annual Evaluation Report, NPS MedicineWise found there had been a 7% relative decrease in prescribing high-dose statins and a 10% decrease in anti-dementia drugs for the financial year.

NPS said its program, 'Cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk: guiding lipid management (2011-12)', was expected to produce a decrease in prescribing of higher strength statins and ezetimibe and an increase in prescribing of lower-strength statins.

NPS said about 38% of GPs took part in the program, with the relative decrease of 7%

in prescribing corresponding to a \$22.67m decrease in PBS expenditure, NPS said.

'Treating the symptoms of dementia (2008-2010)' was expected to see a decrease in prescribing of cholinesterase inhibitors and memantine as well as antipsychotics, it said.

Thirty seven percent of GPs participated, with a 12% relative decrease in modelled PBS expenditure on anti-dementia drugs, NPS said.

Vit C cancer treatment

VITAMIN C in conjunction with conventional chemotherapeutic agents inhibited ovarian cancer in mice and reduced chemotherapy-related toxicity in patients with ovarian cancer, a new study has found.

Published in *Science Translational Medicine*, 'High-dose parenteral ascorbate enhanced chemosensitivity of ovarian cancer and reduced toxicity of chemotherapy' also found that intravenous vitamin C helped kill cancer cells without harming normal tissues.

The study said larger clinical trials were justified looking at intravenous vitamin C in conjunction with standard chemotherapy.

To read the study, [CLICK HERE](#).

Hot air over Canberra

NO it's not the usual political wrangle creating the hot air; it's a plea for compassion floating over Parliament House in Canberra, highlighting the need for the reimbursement of a lifesaving therapy for a rare form of cystic fibrosis.

As parliamentarians sit for the first time this year, a billboard affixed to an eight story high hot air balloon has called on the Federal Government and the manufacturer of Kalydeco to agree on a price for the medicine and "Give The Breath of Life" to 200 Australians living with cystic fibrosis caused by a gene mutation known as G551D.

Cystic Fibrosis Australia ceo David Jack said, "Kalydeco is the first medicine to target the genetic defect that causes cystic fibrosis and can radically improve the lives of those affected."

Pharmacy diagnosis

HOMETOWN Pharmacy in Newaygo, West Michigan, USA, is participating in a pilot program offering free flu and strep throat diagnostic testing and treatment services to eligible patients, reports *WZZM 13abc*.

The Hometown Pharmacy chain has already established itself as a high level provider of pharmacy services with free home medication deliveries, compounding services and an extensive range of online services.



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Medsafe meetings

MEDSAFE has published its workshop allowing the therapeutic products industry to give input on communication with the authority. Improvements suggested included increasing meetings with the Industry Liaison Group to three times a year in preparation for the ANZ Therapeutic Products Agency.

Guild Update

Close the Gap

The Guild is supporting National Close the Gap Day 2014 which is being held on March 20. Australian Community Pharmacies are encouraged to participate in this important event as they can make a real difference to ensuring ongoing support by government for Indigenous health equality.

Participation in National Close the Gap Day by your pharmacy is an excellent way to demonstrate your support for this issue, to give your staff and community a chance to participate in it and to be part of a broad, national movement working for health equality. It gives your pharmacy and employees the opportunity to show their support for closing the 10 to 17 year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians.

Involvement can be as simple as displaying posters and a pledge for support for Close the Gap or you could partner with your local Aboriginal Health Service to run a morning tea or a session on medication management for local community members.

A package is available that includes posters, a DVD, stickers, balloons, and brochures.

Community Pharmacies can obtain resources and more information by [clicking here](#).



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Chemmart 'Spotcheck'

WEST Australians will have more opportunity to get skin spots checked from today with the launch of the 'Spotcheck' service in over 50 Chemmart pharmacies in WA.

The initiative, founded by doctors who specialise in skin cancer, Dr Tony Dicker MBBS PhD and Dr Gary Pellizzari MBBS FRACGP Dip RACOG, enables the diagnosis in store via digital dermatoscope technology.

The technology used is a German designed 'handyscope' which is an attachment for an iPhone or iPod Touch turning it into a digital dermatoscope and allows for polarized and non-polarized mole pictures of up to 20X magnification.

These are then saved in a password protected, secure app.

If more than three spots are to be checked, the patient is advised to consult their GP.

Chemmart Pharmacy executive director Jonathan Layton said Chemmart hopes increasing the accessibility of skin checks will help to raise awareness of skin cancer and make a difference in the lives of Australians.

"We hope the added convenience of Spotcheck will be an incentive

for customers who might not otherwise get their skin checked to do so – for peace of mind if nothing else."

Spotcheck starts at \$35 for one spot and takes only a few minutes.



Chemmart Pharmacist Luke Edmunds checks Sharni Hillier for sunspots

BI UK recalls Immukin

BOEHRINGER Ingelheim has recalled Immukin solution for injection (0.1mg), with a range of batch numbers, for expiry dates from 2015 and beyond.

This was due to an unidentified impurity found during routine stability testing, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said.

"Since the impurity is currently uncharacterised, the above batches are being recalled as a precautionary measure."

To check the batch numbers, [CLICK HERE](#).

Win [A'kin] Purely Revitalising Lifting Eye Creme

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an [A'kin] Purely Revitalising Lifting Eye Creme.

Only the [A'kin] by Purist Purely Revitalising Range harnesses the pure power of naturally potent antioxidants & omega oils to brighten, firm & lift skin for a more youthful looking, radiant you.

This new eye crème naturally combats the signs of ageing by lifting and revitalising the fine skin around your eyes & brightening the delicate eye area.

For more information visit: www.purist.com.

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

Which age group is the new [A'kin] Purely Revitalising Range targeted at?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Judith Dyason** from **Discount Drug Stores**.



DISPENSARY CORNER

TORTURE music.

Looking for suitable background music for your pharmacy?

You may be wise to steer clear of Canadian electro-industrial pioneers Skinny Puppy, whose music has been reputed to have been used at Guantanamo Bay prisoner detention facility.

Cevin Key, keyboardist for the group, told *CTV News* that a fan who had served as a guard there advised him that their music was used in the jail.

They are seeking \$400,000 compensation for the use of their music.

"I am not only against the fact they're using our music to inflict damage on somebody else but they are doing it without anybody's permission," Key said to the *BBC*.

Apparently it was US military policy to blast loud music into detainees' cells, ranging from Metallica and Nine Inch Nails to Queen and Sesame Street.

It seems this style of music may not be overly conducive to enticing pharmacy visitors to linger and spend in store.

THE breath of life.

If your pharmacy is the recipient of prank phone calls, it might pay to think twice before hanging up.

Ged Hall of Hartlepool suffered a brain clot and drifted in and out of consciousness over 36 hours, dialling what he thought was his friend's number when he regained consciousness, the *Hartlepool Mail* reported.

Perfect stranger Mary Readman answered the phone and heard only groans and other unintelligible sounds and thought the heavy breathing at the end of the line was a prankster; but after ringing back and hearing groans but no verbal replies, she called the police, with officers tracing the call and transporting the unconscious Hall to hospital for three operations and recovery, the publication reported.