

## Pharm Congress open

**REGISTRATIONS** for the Pharmacy Australia 2014 Congress are now open.

The Congress will be held from 10 to 12 Oct at the National Convention Centre in Canberra.

Early bird registrations close on 31 Jul, with Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) members paying \$749 and non members paying \$936.

PSA national president Grant Kardachi said attendees could choose from a range of clinical, practice, business and management sessions under the congress theme 'Solve the pharmacy puzzle', which would focus on the changing nature of pharmacy.

Attending the conference gives the opportunity of achieving 28.5 CPD credits, the PSA said.

For more information, **CLICK HERE**.

## Oxycodone concern

**PHARMACY** Professionals Australia (PPA) has called on the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to join it in opposing a Federal Government decision to allow the supply of generic oxycodone (presently only available as brand name OxyContin) in a non tamper-proof formulation.

In July 2014, the current tender to supply oxycodone expires, paving the way for the introduction of a generic that does not have the current standard tamper-proof formulation which the PPA said was introduced in April and was designed to eliminate black market use.

PPA ceo Chris Walton raised concerns about the safety of community pharmacists if the high-dose non tamper-proof version is available.

"In the interests of the safety of pharmacists, and community health generally, we believe that only tamper-resistant formula oxycodone should be available in Australia.

"The incidence of pharmacists being threatened by patients looking to obtain OxyContin have been well documented and constitute a threat to not only pharmacists but other patients seeking access to the vital services provided to them by community pharmacy."

A Guild spokesperson said the matter was under "active consideration" by the Guild, in consultation with the TGA and with manufacturers.

## COAG closing the gap

**IN A** 'Timing impact assessment for COAG Closing the Gap targets' report on child mortality, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) examines interventions aimed at reducing child mortality, and more.

**CLICK HERE** to access the report.

## Student Bus Plan comp

**THE** National Student Business Plan competition has seen entries from several universities returning after some years to the competition and a single student team, the Pharmacy Guild has said.

Registrations have closed for the competition which has a \$12,000 cash prize for the top three teams.

It involved students creating a business plan and having it reviewed by pharmacists and accountants and business experts, the Guild said.

The competition finals will be held in Melbourne from 12 to 14 Sep.

## RB HealthHub update

**RECKITT** Benckiser (RB) has relaunched its RB HealthHub website to give pharmacists and pharmacy assistants a rewards program, updated training modules, personalised activity dashboard, product information, news feeds and industry updates.

RB marketing manager-healthcare professional Vanessa McCutcheon said the goal was for HealthHub to be a one stop shop for pharmacists and pharmacy assistants.

## PPA seeks award hike

**THE** Pharmacy Professionals Australia (PPA) surveyed more than 1,200 pharmacists around their salaries and working conditions, a report which it said showed discount pharmacy was driving down wages.

President Dr Geoff March said the responses to its annual pharmacy remuneration showed that pharmacists working at Chemist Warehouse seemed to be earning on average \$5.61 an hour less than the average rate of pay in community pharmacy across pay classifications.

March said it was important to lift the Pharmacy Industry Award, which would force discount pharmacy to raise its salaries.

Lowering the Award was unnecessary as according to the remuneration report, 44% of pharmacists were employed on the basis of a flat hourly rate in lieu of penalty rates, March said.

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## WIN A DESIGNER BRANDS PACK

This week **PD** is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win a **Designer Brands** pack.

The pack includes a Mineral Eye Shadow Palette and a Paw Paw Plus Kit.

DB's Paw Paw products contain 8% paw paw extract. This pack includes an ointment, hand cream and lip balm.

With 48 colours, the Mineral Eye Shadow Palette is perfect for highlighting the eyes! The mineral formulation includes natural ingredients, ensuring a finish that doesn't cake.

To win, be first to send the correct answer to:  
**comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.**

What colour is the case of the 48 Mineral Eye shadow Palette?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, **Alexandra Moores** from **Pharmabroker.**



"With the PBS changes, this workshop has empowered me to analyse my business and put strategies in place to reduce the impact. Geoff is a vibrant presenter."

Fiona Mann, Mannum Chemplus



Pharmacy Accredited A1403FMRC1 This course has been accredited for 28 group 2 CPD credits and 10 group 1 CPD credits for inclusion on a pharmacist's CPD Record. Participants can convert the 10 group 1 CPD credits into 20 group 2 CPD credits by completing an optional assessment within 3 months.

## RGH E-Bulletin

THE RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin is out, dealing with the herbal product *Garcinia cambogia*, promoted for weight loss.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read it.

## Guild Update

LAST month's Federal Budget has again confirmed the significant savings being reaped by taxpayers from ongoing reforms of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

The Budget revealed that the PBS will cost \$4.5 billion less from 2013-14 to 2016-17 than was expected in last year's Budget.

According to the Medicines Partnership of Australia PBS Scorecard, the amount taken out of the PBS forward estimates over the next three financial years had a larger positive impact on the Budget bottom line over that period than any savings measure in the 2014 Budget.

Clearly, PBS Reforms are delivering massive savings. With those savings come significant - and growing - impacts on all parts of the pharmaceutical industry - manufacturers, the supply chain and community pharmacies.

The Budget also included a 13 per cent increase in PBS co-payments from 01 Jan 2015, over and above the usual CPI increase - an increase of \$0.80 per prescription for patients with a concession card and of \$5.00 per prescription for those without a concession card. Safety net thresholds will also increase well above inflation.

The most recent study on the impact of sharp co-payment increases concluded that increases in patient contributions particularly impact on concessional patients' ability to afford medicines. This is an impact that should be of concern to policy makers.



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

## Call to restrict pholcodine

A RECENT article in the *Australian Prescriber* has called for pholcodine to be re-classified to prescription only, saying there is good evidence linking the drug to an increased risk of anaphylactic reactions to neuromuscular blocking drugs.

'Anaphylaxis and anaesthesia - can treating a cough kill?', written by Tweed Hospital Anaesthetic Allergy Clinic director and consultant anaesthetist Helen Crilly and Anaesthetic Allergy Clinic Royal North Shore Hospital director and consultant anaesthetist Michael Rose, said anaphylaxis during surgery had been estimated in approximately one in 10,000 cases.

"Neuromuscular blocking drugs are responsible for approximately 60% of intraoperative anaphylaxis."

The article said while the reported rate of anaphylaxis caused by neuromuscular blocking drugs was "much higher" in Australia, the

true incidence was unknown due to reporting being voluntary and multiple drugs being administered at the time of anaesthesia but it was likely under-reported, it said.

The article said following the withdrawal of pholcodine from the Norwegian market by the supplier, the rate of anaphylactic reactions to neuromuscular blocking drugs in Norway had "significantly reduced".

The European Medicines Agency found that the evidence of a link between pholcodine and anaphylaxis was circumstantial, calling for further data to clarify this.

"While it may be argued that there is insufficient proof to ban pholcodine, its lack of efficacy and a strong suspicion of danger should be regarded as sufficient for it to be withdrawn.

"If it is not possible to withdraw pholcodine from the market, we propose a re-classification to 'prescription only'."

The Department of Health said the Therapeutic Goods Administration had reviewed this issue and concluded there was insufficient evidence to support the association at this stage.

"There is no current consideration of the scheduling of pholcodeine being conducted.

"A decision to include a substance in a particular Schedule must take into account the balance between the public's legitimate need to access these substances and the need to protect the community from potential health risks."

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

## Generic celecoxib

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a generic formulation of celecoxib, Pfizer's non-steroidal anti-inflammatory of the Cox-2 inhibitor class, marketed as Celebrex.

In Australia the product is indicated for short term pain relief as well as a treatment for osteo and rheumatoid arthritis.

Mylan Pharmaceuticals has approval to market 50 mg celecoxib capsules while Teva Pharmaceuticals has won the contract to supply higher doses.

## DISPENSARY CORNER

SIR, come beak here please.

You may have had to deal with shop lifters in your pharmacy but we bet nothing quite like airport officials in Cuba, who arrested a man trying to leave the island with 66 native birds stuffed into his trousers.

The United States resident had secreted Cuban Grassquits inside his pants, the bulk of which drew attention from customs officials, *Juventud Rebelde* reported.

Apparently, the incident occurred last month in Camaguey, a trip to the courts of which can't have been cheap.

NOW try 'glomerulonephritis'.

We've said it before and we'll say it again - these spelling bee competitions really need to give pharmaceutical names and terms a go.

That way, the Scripps National Spelling Bee wouldn't have declared two people co-champions, the first time this had happened in 52 years, the *Telegraph* reported.

The US teenagers, Sriram Hathwar of New York and Ansun Sujoe of Texas drew for the title after nearly finishing the 25 championship words, both spelling 12 words correctly in a row, the publication reported.

They both take home about \$34,000 in cash and prizes, the *Telegraph* said.

CAN we thank you in donuts?

If a customer enters your pharmacy carrying odd-looking equipment, maybe just let them be - they could save your life.

An ambulance technician wearing a carbon monoxide detector who entered a Dunkin' Donuts in New York possibly saved the employees' lives when the detector went off, indicating high levels of the odourless, colourless and poisonous gas, *Associated Press* reported.

An investigation found that a vent in one of the ovens was the cause of the leak, the publication reported.

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