

“ 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, Kofeeds Pharmacy

Willach milestones

WILLACH md John Koot said APP feedback reaffirmed Willach's belief that the industry was starting to realise the importance of separating logistics from value-add. "By making dispensary more efficient by delegating the logistics out the back, you can maximise the value-add time you spend with your customers."

Willach will celebrate its 500th Australian Pharmacy Solution placement and its 150th Australian CONSIG automated dispense.

\$2m in discarded meds

THE first audit of the National Return and Disposal of Unwanted Medicines (NatRUM) program has found that the total government cost for the 31 most frequently discarded medicines was estimated to be \$2.05m

Roughly 540 tonnes of medicines were disposed of annually from extrapolation and of these, almost 44% had not expired, the audit found.

The findings will be outlined in Parliament House today by acting Minister for Health Fiona Nash.

The report said pharmacists with medical practitioners would have a pivotal role in optimising medicine prescription and minimising wastage.

The audit of 686 bins, which was conducted by the Monash University Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, found that 68% of medicines belonged to five therapeutic classes, with most medicines for cardiovascular health (18%), the nervous system (17%) and the alimentary tract (16%).

Insulin, salbutamol, paracetamol, frusemide and glyceryl trinitrate were the top five most commonly discarded medicines.

The majority of returned medicines were scheduled at 85%, with 81% Schedule 4.

Only 2% of bins contained "inappropriate items," the report found, with 2.3% (about 500) of medicines being Schedule 8 and 12.1% of bins contained sharps, warranting further investigation as to why some pharmacists did not comply with protocols regarding correct disposal of these.

However the report found that pharmacists were generally adherent to NatRUM protocols.

Chair Warwick Plunkett said the findings were likely to generate a number of recommendations for government and pharmacy organisations around the PBS and the pharmacist's role in dispensing medications and their ongoing management.

The audit findings justified continued funding for the program to ensure availability in the future, the report said.

The audit did not include RUM bins from Western Australia due to logistics.

An audit of these bins was hoped to be performed in the near future, NatRUM project manager Simon Appel said.

TGA future blueprint

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has published its third six monthly progress report on reforms made to the organisation to ensure it remains adaptable.

The document, titled 'TGA reforms: A blueprint for TGA's future - Progress report as at 31 December 2013' is available on the TGA website and includes the expected benefits from the reforms and progress at 31 Dec.

To read it, [CLICK HERE](#).

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Sigma buys Central

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has signed an agreement to purchase Central Healthcare for \$24.5m (PD breaking news yesterday)

In a letter to suppliers, Central Healthcare Group ceo Michael Story said the Central Healthcare Services (CHS) and PharmaSave businesses would remain independent operations, with management teams continuing in place and Story remaining as group ceo.

"The CHS business will continue to operate independently of the current Sigma wholesale operations and operate as a separate brand with its own operating infrastructure.

"The new relationship with Sigma will create new expansion opportunities for CHS through access to Sigma's national footprint and infrastructure."

Strong support for CSOs

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia said there had been "strong support" for wholesalers' Community Service Obligation (CSO) with two thirds of participants at an APP interactive session saying it had a positive impact on their business.

Guild executive director David Quilty wrote in *forefront* that about 200 people had attended the session of which about 140 were pharmacists.

Attendees used a keypad to answer multiple choice questions, with results providing "some very useful insights into the thinking of pharmacy owners and other pharmacists," Quilty said.

The Guild intended to provide a shorter version of the survey to branches but some results were published, including that more than 90% of respondents said that all PBS-listed products should be made available to CSO wholesalers.

About 44% of participants said that the dispensing fee should be increased while 40% believed both this and the level of mark up should be increased, Quilty said.

There was "across-the-board"

support for electronic prescriptions, a pharmacy e-health record and an increased emphasis on pharmacy-based telehealth services, he said.

More than 80% of respondents wanted professional programs expanded in the next Agreement, with almost the same percentage believing these should be delivered through the community pharmacy network.

Quilty said it should be recognised that this was a relatively small sample of people and it was important to ensure surveys were indicative of the broader community pharmacy population.

To read more survey results, [CLICK HERE](#).

Cocaine habit reversal

A NEW Australian study published in *Neuropsychopharmacology* has demonstrated the cocaine habit reversing potential of N-acetylcysteine (NAC).

The authors are from the School of Psychology and the Brain and Mind Research Institute, University of Sydney, NSW.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the abstract.

Tool for asthma

RESEARCHERS from Sydney's Woolcock Institute of Medical Research have created a tool for doctors and pharmacists to use to ascertain whether an asthmatic patient's condition is controlled.

The Primary care Asthma Control Screening tool is a series of five yes or no questions which could help health practitioners work out whether the patient's condition was being managed effectively, project manager Kate LeMay said.

The group's research, published in *Primary Care Respiratory Journal*, showed that a simple asthma control screening tool was feasible for use in community pharmacies, and had good sensitivity for determining patients with asthma that was not well-controlled.

To read the group's research, [CLICK HERE](#).



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TGA publishes 8 KPIs

AS a part of the Department of Health, the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) stated aims are to safeguard and enhance the health of the Australian community through the effective and timely administration of the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989.

The Australian Government regulates therapeutic goods, implements TGA reform and establishes the ANZ Therapeutic Products Agency through this Act.

The TGA's first key performance indicators (KPI) report, covering July to December, has been published with eight KPIs identified.

For more, [CLICK HERE](#).

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry.



This weeks travel specials are brought to you by Travel on Sale.

Travel On Sale have a Hawaii sale for readers today.

A Waikiki fly and stay package starts from \$1439 per person for four nights including return airfares and reduced nightly rates.

Or you can stay at the 4.5 star Modern Honolulu for four nights with flights, from \$1779 per person, including a free room upgrade.

If you go beyond O'ahu, you can fly free to a neighbouring island, choosing from Maui, Kaua'i or Hawai'i.

Accommodation packages start from \$259 per person, including three nights, free WiFi, reduced nightly rates and more.

The offer ends 17 Apr. For more deals, visit the website at www.travelonsale.com.au or call 1300 013 729 to book.

'Self Care Alliance' paper

THE Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI) and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia have prepared a discussion paper to provide an outline of a proposal for a Self Care Alliance with detail of its proposed timing, structure membership, initial operations and activities.

Such an Alliance is something ASMI has been working toward for some time (**PD** 30 Aug 2013) and ASMI executive director Dr Deon Schoombie said the release of the paper invited people other than stakeholders, who had already been consulted, to participate.

The Alliance's aim would be to provide an authoritative source of information on self care, and how it could help people better look after themselves, the paper said.

Highlighting that the COAG Reform Council report, published in November, stated that waiting

times for a GP appointment viewed as 'unacceptable' rose from 17.8% in 2009 to 27.4% in 2012, the two peak bodies argue that while Australia has one of the world's best health systems it was on an unsustainable trajectory, with rising government expenditure, and demand exceeding supply for some services such as GPs.

The intention of the Alliance would be to form a roundtable of stakeholders who could initiate efforts to drive solutions to emerging issues, said the report.

Areas of attention for the alliance would include lifestyle, health literacy and safe use of medicines.

Prof Services program

SMARTERPHARM has launched its Professional Services and Support Program.

The program, with a key objective of making it easier to meet QCPP accreditation requirements and obtain PPI payments, aimed to enhance pharmacies' professional services profile by giving members resources to help implement a health-care activity, with a calendar of primary care events planned, including disease state management and risk assessment activities, SmarterPharm general manager Vihung Kapadia said.

The first primary care activity will be on 14 Apr and the program is free for SmarterPharm members, who will be contacted with more information.

Check PBS eligibility

THE Pharmacy Bulletin Board has reminded pharmacists to check patients are eligible for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) before supplying them, as pharmacists might not be paid for claims if the patient is not entitled under PBS or RPBS.

Pharmacists are advised to check a customer's entitlement card and make sure details match those in the system before giving out medicine, and include these details in the PBS or RPBS claim.

GSK recalls lozenges

GLAXOSMITHKLINE (GSK) is recalling a number of nicotine lozenge batches sold globally.

This follows the detection of manufacturing issues in some batches, where in some cases the lozenges were larger or smaller than manufacturing standards, the company said.

The affected brands in Australia are Nicabate Lozenge 2mg (AUST R81977) - packs of 36 and 72 lozenges, Nicabate Lozenge 4mg (AUST R 81978) - packs of 36 and 72 lozenges, Nicabate Mini Lozenge 1.5mg (AUST R 156603) - packs of 20 and 60 lozenges and Nicabate Mini Lozenge 4mg (AUST R 156604) - packs of 20 and 60 lozenges.

GSK said it had advised the TGA of its actions and was confident that lozenges currently in market did not pose a safety risk.

The company said it had also temporarily suspended production and distribution at its site in South Carolina.

The TGA said GSK's medical assessment of the dose of nicotine from consumption of the affected batches indicated that there was no significant impact on the clinical efficacy or any toxicological risk.

DISPENSARY CORNER

YES YES YES, this, so much.

New Yorkers have the right idea - an ATM has opened which dispenses cupcakes rather than cash.

The individually wrapped cupcakes are sold by company Sprinkles at its bakery (which doesn't make a whole lot of sense), and it operates four others around the United States, *stuff.co.nz* reported.

You can buy up to four cupcakes in one go at US\$4 each, as well as cookies and cupcakes for dogs, with the 24 hour ATM holding 760 cupcakes at a time, the publication reported - bringing all new meaning to a smash-and-grab's sweet pay off.

THAT'LL buff out.

Another one from the 'don't do this' files - a brand new £80,000 Range Rover is expected to be written off after being wedged between a building and basement in London.

The vehicle crashed through railings, across the pavement and then down a 14 foot drop to become wedged, the *Telegraph* reported.

The owner and passengers were unhurt but their bank account won't have been as lucky, with the Range Rover clocking up less than 500 miles, the publication reported.

WHY didn't I think of that.

If you're looking for new products to stock, you could consider the newest product on shelves in China - bottled fresh air.

Apparently, the bottled air is collected in Linan, at Tianmu Mountain.

Product manager Long Peng said the bottled air had a much higher level of negative ions per cubic centimetre, which are apparently the cure to ills, *Orange News* reported.

"All the modern things we have generate an over abundance of positive ions that make us feel tired, depressed and irritable."