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### DoH IT services tender

**THE** Department of Health has issued a pre-release notice for its ICT services agreement which is due to expire on 30 Jun next year. The notice gives the timeframe for the request for tender which will be released at the end of this month - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

## Crack down a reminder

**THE** global crack down on counterfeit and illegal medicines purchased over the internet has been hailed as a timely reminder to consumers of the risks of purchasing medicines from overseas websites (*PD* 26 May).

Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) national manager professor John Skerritt said the TGA advised consumers to exercise "extreme caution" when purchasing medicines over the internet, with some looking like genuine medicines but potentially

containing the wrong active ingredient, too much or too little or dangerous substances.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia president George Tambassis said consumers should use a pharmacy and consult a pharmacist where they could identify a physical address in Australia, and where they could be sure the pharmacist was registered and accountable to their registration board.

"The internet pharmacy environment can be tricky to navigate, with significant numbers of unscrupulous and illegal operators in the mix with bona fide pharmacies, operated by ethical professionals registered with their jurisdiction."

The TGA said a large part of the substances seized were erectile dysfunction medications, and the Guild reminded consumers that Viagra and its generic alternatives were only available with a prescription.

**CLICK HERE** for the TGA information page on buying medicines over the internet.

**MEANWHILE** as part of the operation, the UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said it targeted YouTube accounts and videos for the first time.

The agency said 18,671 videos were removed since last year's operation.

Head of enforcement Alastair Jeffrey said it had removed almost 20,000 links to illegally operating websites that were supported by social media platforms.

### MA ceo to leave

**MEDICINES** Australia (MA) ceo Dr Brendan Shaw has announced he will be leaving the organisation to take on an international, senior role within the global pharmaceutical industry (*PD* breaking news yesterday).

Shaw told *PD* it was an overseas role and said in a statement yesterday that the role would allow him to "stay in touch" with the pharmaceutical industry.

MA members have been told that further information could be expected in the near future.

MA chairman Dr Martin Cross said the search for a new ceo was underway to take over from Shaw from 12 Sep, who would take up his new role later this year.

The Pharmacy Guild congratulated Shaw on the appointment, saying he had exhibited a collaborative and constructive approach to the challenges facing the pharmaceutical sector.

### New EMA approvals

**THE** European Medicines Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) has recommended varying levels of marketing authorisation for six new products.

The approvals are for Gazyvaro (obinutuzumab), Plegridy (peginterferon beta-1a), Nuwiq (simoctogog alfa), Simbrinza (brinzolamide / brimonidine tartrate) and Envarsus (tacrolimus).

Additionally, the CHMP recommended extensions of indications for Arzerra (ofatumumab), Halaven (eribulin mesylate) and Vfend (Voriconazole).

The CHMP also recommended a conditional marketing authorisation for Translarna (ataluren), an orphan medicine for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy caused by nonsense mutations.

It is to be used for patients aged five years or older who are able to walk.

### Arthritis/osteo webinar

**ARTHRITIS & Osteoporosis** NSW is holding a virtual seminar to provide clarity for health professionals on what information should be provided to clients about vitamin D, as well as providing insight into the latest research in this area.

Presented by Professor Rebecca Mason, the virtual meeting follows the recently highlighted level of vitamin D insufficiency in Australians.

Held at 5pm on 02 Jun, the webinar will also be recorded.

**CLICK HERE** to register.



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## Sustainable spend?

AN article in the *MJA* has said the idea that health spend in the country is unsustainable is “remarkably weak.”

“Can we sustain health spending?” stated that despite National Commission of Audit projections, economies were flexible and spend composition varied.

It said while a reason for concern might be that health spending in Australia could be inefficient, increased co-payments and decreased public spending were unlikely to resolve this issue.

“The effect of the recent budgetary measures on economic costs — resource use — will be miniscule.”

For more, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Pharmacy minimum hours

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has called for the inclusion of pharmacy in the Productivity Commission Issues paper ‘Relative Costs of Doing Business in Australia: Retail Trade Industry’, submitting that non-standard hours are required.

The submission said pharmacy was a specialist retail industry and that growth had declined due to increased expenses and the impact of price disclosure.

It said pharmacies faced high operating costs while having a limited ability to pass on underlying costs due to prices being regulated.

“Rental costs continue to rise, outstripping other business costs and CPI increases.

“Labour costs have risen substantially, in part due to the inflexibility of the modern award system.”

The Guild submission said extended and seven day a week trading patterns were required to meet the expectations and health care demands of customers.

“The Guild shares the concerns of other retailers with regard to the impact of the penalty rates contained within the modern

awards for retail, including the Pharmacy Industry Award 2010 (PIA).

“The Guild strongly supports the need within the PIA and other retail awards for the facilitative capacity for employers and employees to agree to a minimum shift that is less than three hours.”

The Guild’s submission said that pharmacies contributed around \$15.3b to the Australian economy.

National president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Grant Kardachi said the suggestion that professional services such as dose administration aids might be affected due to the reduced viability of the sector was of great concern.

Professional Pharmacists Australia said it was disappointed by the submission with president Dr Geoff March saying a better solution would be a whole-of-pharmacy approach to the CPA reform, with stakeholder cooperation.

“The answer to the crisis in pharmacy is not to cut pharmacists’ pay and lobby for owners to employ pharmacists for less than three hours.”



## DISPENSARY CORNER

JUST so random.

The UK’s Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued an alert about an individual impersonating a member of its staff.

The random thing is, this ‘Karen Smith’ has rung only one company and asked to speak to the “head of engineering” about “procedural infrastructure”, claiming to be from the MHRA Regulatory Licensing Group.

MHRA said it did not have such an employee but we’re imagining someone’s trying to pin down the building’s blue prints for an infiltration of its walls.

SPACED out.

A bit out of left field but, did you know there’s an area of study called space medicine? It looks at the practice of medicine for astronauts in outer space, and there can be a LOT of things to work on, from loss of bone density and muscle mass to radiation effects and more.

*Space Safety Magazine* took a look at the contents of medical kits over the years of space travel.

Evolving from the 1961 Project Mercury’s “very rudimentary” kits with autoinjectors (syringes which gave a single dose of medicine) that could deliver anti-motion sickness medication, a stimulant and a vasoconstrictor for shock, the publication reported that the International Space Station now has two separate medical kits, one for the Russian segment and one for the US part.

The US kit has about 190 medicaments, as well as diagnostic equipment and emergency resuscitation devices, the publication reported.

COME pick up your rabid racoons.

Hopefully someone had their vaccinations - the Westchester County Health Department has asked the person who left five baby racoons on its doorstep to be assessed immediately for rabies, AP reports.

## Guild Update

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR EMPLOYERS

#### Increase in Superannuation Guarantee Rate from 1 July 2014

The 2014 Federal Budget has confirmed the superannuation guarantee (SG) rate will increase from 9.25 percent to 9.5 percent from 1 July 2014. This is as previously legislated.

However, changes have been made to the schedule for eventually increasing the SG rate to 12 percent.

The rate will remain at 9.5 percent until 30 June 2018.

It will then increase by 0.5 percent each year until it reaches 12 percent in 2022-2023.

| Financial Year | SG Rate |
|----------------|---------|
| 1 July 2014    | 9.5%    |
| 1 July 2015    | 9.5%    |
| 1 July 2016    | 9.5%    |
| 1 July 2017    | 9.5%    |
| 1 July 2018    | 10.0%   |
| 1 July 2019    | 10.5%   |
| 1 July 2020    | 11.0%   |
| 1 July 2021    | 11.5%   |
| 1 July 2022    | 12.0%   |

## WIN A PLUNKETTS PACK

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily & Plunketts** is giving one reader the chance to win a Nutri-Synergy moisturiser pack.

Nutri-Synergy effectively moisturises dry, winter skin without petrochemicals, parabens, colours or fragrances - natural goodness and no nasties. This prize pack includes moisturisers for dry skin & rough skin as well as lip balm and hand products. Nutri-Synergy – Natural Dermatology – better for you!



To win, be first to send in the correct answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

Name one of the “nasties” that Nutri-Synergy products do not contain

Congratulations to yesterday’s winner **Ghazal Ghodosi** from **Choice Pharmacy**



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia