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MA: PBS spend flat

MEDICINES Australia (MA) has said the Department of Health has confirmed the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) grew by \$150m last year to \$9.15b to the Senate Select Committee on Health.

This was below inflation, MA ceo Tim James said, and negligible for the 2013-14 financial year.

"The rest of the Health portfolio may not have made the tough decisions to bring costs under control, but the PBS is flat as a pancake.

"There is clearly fiscal room to get new medicines listed quickly for Australian patients."

SHPA numbers grow

MEMBERSHIP continues to grow for the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), with a total of 3,268 compared with 3,169 in 2013.

In its annual report, the organisation had a net year surplus of \$177,513, compared with \$450,297 in 2013.

Highlights from the year included the adoption of a new strategic plan and the formation of the Accredited Pharmacists Reference Group - [CLICK HERE](#) to access.

ATO super reminder

THE Australian Tax Office is again reminding pharmaceutical employers of the increased super payments made on behalf of employees, ahead of the first quarterly payment on 28 Oct (*PD* 11 Jul).

Fred IT: business as usual

TELSTRA'S \$1b health business will not see any changes to the Fred IT Group (*PD* 23 Oct).

Fred ceo Paul Naismith said it was business as usual for the organisation, as Telstra launched its new business unit, Telstra Health.

With a 50% stake in Fred IT Group bought last year, Telstra said the pharmacy software provider would form one of the foundations of the unit.

Naismith said there was no short term change to Fred IT, but the company supported Telstra's vision of making health care better and more accessible.

Telstra recognised the role of pharmacy in the future of health and it was important that pharmacists could be part of the health care team going forward, he said.

Telstra retail group executive Gordon Ballantyne said the company looked forward to

partnering with industry to advance healthcare and connect the different parts of the health industry, including pharmacies, hospitals, patients, government and health funds.

The organisation launched a joint venture with Swiss company Medgate called ReadyCare, which would see patients speaking with GPs over video or phone to receive prescriptions and referrals.

Information would be provided back to the patient's regular GP, with the service operating at all hours, Telstra said.

Australian Medical Association president Associate Professor Brian Owler has said the ReadyCare project would undermine doctor-patient relationships and was a "commercial solution dressed up as a health solution", as patients could get scripts and treatments prescribed from a doctor they had no knowledge of, or relationship with, the *Australian* reported.

For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

PSA vax course tick

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has earned national accreditation with the Australian Skills Quality Authority for its vaccination training course used in the Queensland Pharmacist Immunisation Pilot (QPIP).

The course forms part of the PSA Graduate Diploma of Applied Pharmacy Practice.

PSA national president Grant Kardachi said the course was modelled on pharmacist-specific training used by more than 150,000 pharmacists globally.

Pharmacy Board applications

APPLICATIONS are open for vacancies on national health practitioner regulatory boards, including the Pharmacy Board.

Terms were expected to start around August 2015, with up to three year appointments, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency said.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

WIN A Natural footcare PACK

This week **Pharmacy Daily** and **Plunketts** are giving five readers the chance to win an NS-8 Natural Footcare pack.

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Jobs of the Week

- **Retail Manager** - Blue Mountains Region, NSW (Job# 2010785)
Oversee a large harmonious pharmacy team, fast paced environment.
- **Pharmacist Manager** - Goulburn Valley, VIC (Job# 2010860)
Career opportunity within 100 kms of Melbourne - friendly community.
- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Sunshine Coast, QLD (Job# 2010920)
Mon-Wed perm part-time 27hrs/wk - overseeing dispensary operations.

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Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

24 Oct: Lung Health Education Day; Melbourne; for more details see: www.lungfoundation.com.au

25 Oct: Mental Health First Aid Workshop; Newcastle; details at: www.guild.org.au

25 Oct: Lung Health Education Day; Campbell Town, Tasmania; for more details see: www.lungfoundation.com.au

26 Oct: Managing the side effects of chemotherapy and cancer treatments in the community; James Cook University, Townsville; www.psa.org.au

28 Oct: Expanding role of pharmacists: triage, treat and refer; Warrnambool; more details: www.psa.org.au

30 Oct: Lung Health Education Day; Adelaide; for more details visit: www.lungfoundation.com.au

11 Nov: Better Living With Your Lung Disease Regional Patient Seminar; Mandurah; for more details see: www.lungfoundation.com.au

12 Nov: Better Living With Your Lung Disease Regional Patient Seminar; Port Macquarie; for more details see: www.lungfoundation.com.au

17 Nov: International Lung Cancer Awareness Day; for enquiries email: enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au

19 Nov: World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day; visit www.lungfoundation.com.au

Blackmores \$8.7m profit

BLACKMORES has posted net profit after tax of \$8.7m, up 61% year on year from \$5.4m, and up from \$7.9m in the prior quarter.

The company said the quarter saw record sales and profit, with group sales of \$98.5m, up 17.2% year on year and up from \$93.0m from the prior quarter.

The quarter was the highest on record for profit and sales, beating the fourth quarter of last year into the top spot, ceo Christine Holgate told *PD*.

The company said the result was driven by strong sales growth and supported by improvements to its cost base.

These included improved recovery from its packing and bottling facilities, and some reduction costs through various agreements, Holgate said.

Sales in Australia grew by 23% compared with the corresponding period, with growth in every sales channel including pharmacy, which generated record sales in the quarter, the company said.

Holgate said challenges remained in core markets, particularly Thailand and Australia, though the board was optimistic about prospects to improve shareholder returns this financial year.

These challenges included a subdued retail sector in Thailand due to political and social unrest,



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LOVE your pharmacy.

But do you love it enough to want to keep attending it daily, forever?

One dedicated teacher who taught at Puchenii Mosneni elementary school in rural south-eastern Romania loved his school so much after teaching there for 50 years that he donated his skeleton to the school as a display for the science classroom, the *Daily Mail* reported.

It had always bothered him that the school did not have a human skeleton on display, so he obtained all the appropriate approvals to fulfil his dream of always being a part of subsequent generations' education, the publication reported.

The skeleton was credited with influencing a significant proportion of students pursuing a science or medicine career, although not many took up teaching, the report said.

POTTY logic.

It may be that pharmacy will soon be able to sell marijuana, but if you are thinking of growing your own and that the pot trade may be the saving of your business, you may need to reconsider.

One 65 year old woman in Buffalo, Pennsylvania, presented her logic to court that to raise several grandchildren after her daughter died, she had to grow and sell hydroponically grown marijuana, according to *TribLive*.

Candace Kelly explained to the judge that she sold as much as 100 pounds (approximately 45 kg) of marijuana a year for more than four years, the publication reported.

Kelly was freed on bond and has forfeited US\$393,000 found in her house, it said.

Warfarin is 1st choice

WARFARIN is still the anticoagulant of first choice for GPs according to new Cegedim data surveying 400 GPs.

The analysis showed that warfarin still holds 82% of the market, with Bayer's Xarelto (rivaroxaban) at 10.8%, Boehringer Ingelheim's Pradaxa (dabigatran) at 4.5% and Pfizer's Eliquis (apixaban) at 2.5%.

Concord Hospital Heart Failure Unit and Cardiac Rehabilitation director Professor Andrew Sindone said confidence and familiarity with the novel anticoagulant (NOAC) therapies which have been on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for 12 months may contribute to ongoing growth of their use.

"Overall I would have expected more proactivity with use of NOACs.

"The new data reflects a level of caution by GPs and a focus around new patients versus proactively reviewing long-term patients on warfarin where NOACs could be an option."



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