

Exemptions Q&A

FREQUENTLY asked questions about the new Annual Charge Exemption Scheme (PD Tue) have now been posted on the TGA website after the approval of the amendment regulations on 28 May. See www.tga.gov.au.



PHARMACY PRACTICE INCENTIVES (PPI)

DAA AND CLINICAL INTERVENTION CLAIM DUE

Claiming for PPI will only be available on the 5CPA portal from 1 - 14 June 2015

5cpa.com.au



Funded by the Australian Department of Health as part of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

DDS/CHS set for TV push

DISCOUNT Drug Stores (DDS) will feature in a new television campaign in collaboration with other pharmacies in Sigma's Central Healthcare Services division, with a new 'informercial' offering greater media opportunities for major brands in store.

The initiative was announced at the DDS conference in Fiji late last month - the group's first gathering since it was acquired by Sigma Pharmaceuticals and integrated into its CHS division (PD 09 Sep 14).

Speaking at the conference, DDS executive general manager Douglas Kuskopf-Dallas, said the current climate was "one of the most challenging periods the pharmacy industry has seen".

He said the company had spent the last few years planning for the PBS reforms, with a number of new programs launching to assist members with the transition.

"We're investing in new initiatives while also increasing the business support rebate for our members, which means we've been able to stick to our commitment of the last four years of providing more benefits to owners while reducing costs," Kuskopf-Dallas said.

The acquisition by CHS/Sigma has

seen investment in a range of areas including the TV campaign, a digital strategy, the introduction of a loyalty club and a new eCommerce site which directs orders to individual franchises.

The conference also had a strong focus on professional services, with presenters giving attendees a deeper look into "productivity optimisation tactics" for both front of shop staff and in the dispensary with the goal of increasing the time pharmacists can spend with customers.

"With pharmacy under the spotlight, our stores need to engage with customers more than ever, so we are ensuring we have programs in place to enhance this engagement," Kuskopf-Dallas said.

PillPack raises \$50m

US pharmacy startup PillPack has just raised US\$50m in capital to help it take on traditional retail pharmacy giants such as Walgreens.

PillPack launched in 2013 offering regular deliveries of pre-sorted packages of prescription drugs, vitamins and OTC items which are sent every two weeks.

More than one million dose packs have been delivered in the last two years but in an interesting twist the company is now adding bricks and mortar to its strategy, with the new funding round set to see the company develop new retail pharmacies which will "bring back the friendly neighbourhood pharmacists of yesteryear," according to *TechCrunch*.

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Pfizer Hospira inquiry

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is seeking input from interested parties about the proposed acquisition of Hospira by Pfizer (PD 06 Feb), as part of an "informal merger enquiry".

In a public letter the ACCC, as part of its Informal Review, wants stakeholder views on the two companies as suppliers of biologicals, biosimilars and small molecule pharmaceuticals, including sterile injectables.

In addition the ACCC wants to investigate whether Pfizer and Hospira compete strongly with each other and whether post-acquisition there would be sufficient constraints on Pfizer to ensure that it would still offer competitive prices, quality and service.

Potential overlapping biopharmaceuticals identified in the document include Adalimumab, Bevacizumab, Etanercept, Infliximab, Rituximab and Trastuzumab and a number of small molecule products are also named.

Stakeholders submitting views need to identify their business, reasons for their interest and their opinion about the potential effect on competitiveness, the ACCC said.

Submissions need to be received electronically in PDF format by the ACCC by COB 23 Jun.

PSA nominations

NOMINATIONS for the Pharmaceutical Society Awards for Excellence close on Fri 26 Jun.

For details or more info email michelle.mabile@psa.org.au.

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AMR in focus for FIP

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has welcomed the government's new national strategy to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) (**PD** yesterday).

PSA president Grant Kardachi said the society had long advocated for action in this area, this year joining with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to press the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) to act on the issue.

As a result, FIP is now developing a briefing document on the role of pharmacists in antimicrobial resistance which will be presented at the Federation's annual congress in Germany later in the year.

Responsible use of antibiotics will also be discussed at a stakeholder roundtable prior to the 2016 FIP Congress in Buenos Aires.

Travel Specials

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RACGP outs homeopathy

HOMEOPATHY treatments are not effective and should not be prescribed by GPs or recommended by pharmacists the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has stated in its newly released position statement on homeopathy.

RACGP president Dr Frank R Jones said given the lack of evidence for homeopathy treatments, it does not make sense for them to be prescribed by GPs or sold, recommended or supported by pharmacists.

The contention that homeopathy is an effective treatment is not supported by evidence from systematic literature reviews, the statement says.

"Whilst we appreciate and recognise the right of patients who may choose or seek homeopathy, unfortunately all taxpayers are funding homeopathy via the Federal Government's private health insurance rebate," Jones said.

"In 2013-14 health insurers paid out \$164 million in benefits for natural therapies, an increase of almost 60% from 2010-11."

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) analysed the scientific evidence

earlier this year concluding that there is no evidence for homeopathy (**PD** 12 Mar) and the Society for Science Based Healthcare has called for New Zealand pharmacists to "honour their code of ethics" and remove homeopathy products from their shelves (**PD** 19 Mar).

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) also clarified its position stating that while the PSA is not a regulatory body it recommended pharmacists consider their interactions with patients as well as what stock to hold in store (**PD** 17 Mar).

CLICK HERE for the statement.

TGA EU adoptions

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has formally adopted ten European Union guidelines following consultation within the TGA and with relevant external stakeholders.

Areas covered include quality in pharmaceutical development, stability and active substances, biological medicines including overarching biosimilar guidelines, clinical efficacy & safety and a non-clinical guideline on animal models.

Win a Dermal therapy pack

This week, **Pharmacy Daily** and **Nice Pak Products** are giving away a Dermal Therapy prize pack including Dermal Therapy Heel Balm Platinum, Dermal Therapy Hand Balm, Dermal Therapy Lip Balm and Dermal Therapy Very Dry Skin Cream.

Dermal Therapy is a clinically tested, therapeutic skin and foot care range developed for people who suffer from common skin conditions such as dry cracked heels and feet, very dry skin, or skin conditions like Eczema, Psoriasis and Dermatitis. According to Nice Pak, all Dermal Therapy products have been clinically tested for proven visible results. Each product is formulated with high quality ingredients and has been developed with a concentrated, moisturising emollient base to provide optimum hydration.

To win, be the first pharmacist from **SA** or **NT** to send the correct answer to the following question to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Dermal Therapy Lip Balm's concentrated formula contains a synergistic blend of ingredients designed to soften and hydrate severely dry and chapped lips. What are the three active ingredients?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Antonella Panajia from Main Street Pharmacy.



DISPENSARY CORNER



ALASKAN residents will be able to put marijuana on their Christmas list next year.

The city council in the North Pole precinct of America's northernmost state rejected a proposal on Mon that would have outlawed marijuana dispensaries.

Marijuana was legalised in Alaska in Feb, with the substance to be on the counter next year.

The *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* reported "even Santa Claus — yes, that's his real name — testified in favour of selling pot in this Christmas-themed town, where light poles resemble candy canes."

"Claus said he is a medical marijuana patient, and he'd like to buy pot in North Pole instead of making the short drive to Fairbanks," the report said.

While a number of residents had concerns over the instigation of the legalisation of marijuana in the North Pole, a council member said the precinct already allows the sale of alcohol, cigarettes and guns, with several marijuana dispensaries set to open soon.

"I'M feeling a little under the weather - give me your trousers."

That was how the conversation went during a doctor's consultation with a patient in the US state of Georgia this week.

According to the *Macon Telegraph*, a man walked into a surgery called Harmony Medical Services and asked to see a doctor.

However once he was taken into the consulting room he pulled a gun and demanded that the medico hand over his briefcase, wallet and his pants.

The Bibb County Sheriff's Office said the robber then fled on foot and is still at large.

The report didn't say whether he was actually wearing the stolen pants, or if the visit would be reimbursed by health.

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