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Review “sensible”

MEDICINES Australia (MA) has welcomed the recommendations of the independent review into the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) (PD yesterday), with the organisation saying the industry is “keen to work with the government to ensure that Australia both maintains and evolves our current world class system”.

Health Minister Sussan Ley yesterday said the report showed Australian patients were being forced to wait longer for new drugs “because companies are delaying bringing them down under,” but MA ceo Tim James said the group had repeatedly raised concerns about delays in access arising from the TGA’s “burdensome pre-submission period”.

“Medicines Australia agrees that targeted reform is required so that the Australian regulatory system can better serve the Australian community,” he said, with TGA approval for new medicines taking on average more than a year - twice the time in most OECD countries.

Sigma Reform contract

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has announced a new five year wholesale supply and services deal with Reform Management.

With over 1,900 independent community pharmacy customers nationally, Reform has one of the largest independent networks, Sigma said.

“Reform is providing critical services to their community pharmacy members to support their customers to pro-actively manage their health,” said Sigma ceo Mark Hooper.

“It is really pleasing that Reform has chosen Sigma as their partner of choice and we look forward to this partnership further developing over the long term.”

Reform have been a long term wholesale customer of Sigma, the company said, with the relationship now extended and expanded.

Reform md Peter Nelson said the group is “committed to providing the solutions our independent community pharmacies need to

thrive in this challenging market.

“Entering into a longer term and more strategic partnership with Sigma was a natural choice ... [and] will allow our pharmacy members to better succeed both now and into the future,” he concluded.

Business plan finalists

TWELVE teams will progress through to the quarter final round of the Pharmacy Guild’s National Student Business Plan competition.

The quarter-finalists are from eight universities across the country including first-time entrants Charles Darwin University and the University of Technology Sydney.

This year the competition was also launched in NZ pharmacy schools, with an internal winner from Auckland University to be provided with registration, flights and accommodation to attend the Pharmacy Business Network 2015.

Teams were required to develop two innovative pharmacy services.

Folic acid, calcium permissions

THE TGA has issued restricted representation category permissions relating to the advertising of folic acid and calcium.

Under the exemptions folic acid can be advertised direct to consumers with a minimum recommended daily dosage of 400 micrograms to the effect that the goods may help to prevent neural tube defects such as anencephaly and/or spina bifida.

For calcium, advertising representations to consumers can be made to the effect that the items may assist in the prevention of osteoporosis and other osteoporosis representations.

The Australian Self-Medication Industry highlighted the conditions around the osteoporosis representations, with a minimum recommended daily dose set at 290mg of elemental calcium - based on providing a minimum of 25% of the recommended daily intake of the element.



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Nutritional pharmaceutical company developing bacteria-based medicine

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Six PBS price changes a year

THE Department of Health has confirmed that part of the government's changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme will see the dates on which PBS listed medicines can change increase from three times per year to six times - on 01 February, 01 April, 01 June, 01 August, 01 October and 01 December.

According to a fact sheet issued overnight, the increase in price change points "will allow some first to market generic brands of medicines (that trigger statutory price reductions) to list earlier than previously possible".

The change will also increase the opportunity for review of premium

prices, or add other new listings with pricing implications for existing PBS listed medicines.

There will continue to be three annual price review groups, with 01 Apr, 01 Aug and 01 Dec the effective dates for price increases.

Ad hoc price changes will also be available where necessary, the department said.

Submission deadlines for price change requests will be included on the PBS Calendar which will be shortly updated to reflect the new dates for all six price change points.

Flu shots now urgent

AUSTRALIA is facing another particularly severe flu season but a new Influenza Specialist Group (ISG) survey shows that many Australians have failed to cover themselves because of the late availability of vaccine this year and difficulty in arranging vaccination.

The survey showed that 20% of people who had planned to get a flu shot this year are currently still unprotected with 33% of them saying they could either not get a suitable GP appointment or the vaccine was not available at their GP.

ISG says the peak of the flu season is between Jul and Sep, but the vaccine takes up to two weeks to be effective.

Alexion seals deal

ALEXION Pharmaceuticals has announced that it has successfully completed its previously announced acquisition of Synageva BioPharma Corp (PD 08 May) in an effort to strengthen its position globally in relation to therapeutics for rare diseases.

Alexion says it now has the most robust rare disease pipeline in the biotech industry across a range of therapeutic modalities, making reference to Soliris, and the anticipated approvals for Strensiq for metabolic disorders and Kanuma, an enzyme replacement.



A man walks into a bar...



IN THE winning 45-second short film, entered into the Tropfest and NPS MedicineWise competition, titled 'The Pick Up', a man walks into a moody bar and meets up with an attractive lonely lady.

Her name? Gonorrhoea. "Antibiotics aren't what they used to be," she says seductively.

"People use them so often these days the world has created new strains of superbugs that spread old favourites like tuberculosis, syphilis

and yours truly."

The industry-first short film competition #SaveTheScript drew a wide range of entrants from around the world, with the first prize, won by Vincent Zimbardi of OneWay Pictures, earning \$7,000 and a screening at Tropfest 2015 this December.

To view all 15 finalists in the short film competition see the video section of our website at www.pharmacydaily.com.au/videos.

Hep C report tabled

THE Health Committee of the Federal House of Representatives yesterday tabled the report from its inquiry into Hepatitis C in Australia.

Titled *The Silent Disease*, the report highlights the huge burden Hepatitis C has on the Australian community, with Gilead Sciences ANZ, which participated in the inquiry, commending the work of the committee and its recognition of the important role of the new generation direct-acting antivirals.

Pharmacists & the Pill

SOME pharmacists in the US state of California will soon be able to prescribe birth control products, under legislation which is set to take effect in October this year.

"Advance Practice Pharmacists" will also be able to prescribe asthma inhalers, nicotine products, some antibiotics and vaccinations, with the California Board of Pharmacy in the process of formulating new protocols covering the expanded practice.

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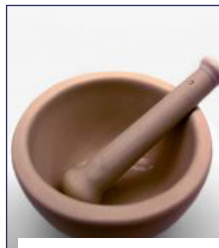
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Jobs of the Week

- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Sunshine Coast, QLD (Job# 2011445)
Part-time Sole Pharmacist - Friday, Saturday, Sunday - central location.
- **Pharmacist in Charge** - Nowra, NSW (Job# 2011452)
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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.

- 5 Jul:** Provide First Aid; Parramatta RSL Club; visit: www.psa.org.au
- 7 Jul:** Cardiovascular Update: Atrial Fibrillation and Anticoagulants; Central Coast; visit: www.guild.org.au
- 6-9 Jul:** Pharmacy Alliance Members' Forum; Honolulu USA; more details at: www.pharmacyalliance.com.au
- 10-12 Jul:** Clinical Pharmacy Practice Seminar (foundation); Mercure Hotel, Sydney; details at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 14 Jul:** Making the most of your aged care services; St Leonards; details at: www.guild.org.au
- 17 Jul:** Effective Workplace Relationships workshop; AIM Brisbane; more info at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 31 Jul-2 Aug:** PSA15; Sofitel Sydney Wentworth; visit: www.psa.org.au/psa15
- 7-8 Aug:** Critical Care Seminar (advanced); Rydges Sydney Central; further details at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 15-16 Aug:** Medication Review Skills in Primary Care; Novotel Brisbane; more info at: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 20-21 Aug:** Pharmacy WA Forum; Pan Pacific Perth; details at: www.pharmacywa.com.au
- 4-5 Sep:** The Friendlies' Conference - 2015; Stamford Grand, Glenelg; more info at: www.pharmacyconference.com.au

ASMI urges S3 advertising

THE new independent report into the regulatory framework for medicines and medical devices (*PD* yesterday) has fallen short by recommending that restrictions on the advertising of Schedule 3 medicines be retained, according to the Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI).

ASMI executive director Deon Schoombie said he welcomed the recommendations on the scheduling framework for non-prescription medicines but believed there was more work to do.

"The Panel acknowledged there

was no evidence that advertising of Schedule 3 medicines would lead to harm and noted the efforts of the non-prescription medicines industry in developing a world first information-based model for Schedule 3 advertising," he said.

Despite this the Panel recommended retention of existing restrictions, meaning "Australia's approach to the advertising of Schedule 3 medicines will remain out of step with many comparable overseas jurisdictions".

Forum R&D success

YESTERDAY saw Australia's first Health Industry Forum take place in Canberra, hosted by Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane, Health Minister Sussan Ley and Assistant Health minister Fiona Nash.

The government-industry forum aimed highlight opportunities for future investment and growth in areas such as clinical trials and the Australian manufacture of innovative medicines.

Medicines Australia said the event helped "set the framework for a promising future for the innovative medicines industry".

New antiplatelet drug

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Kengreal (cangrelor), an intravenous antiplatelet drug that prevents formation of harmful blood clots in the coronary arteries.

It is approved for adult patients undergoing percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI), a procedure designed to unblock narrowed coronary arteries.

PCI is performed on around 500,000 people in the US each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As with all anticoagulants, the key risk with Kengreal is uncontrollable bleeding, the FDA said.



DISPENSARY CORNER

IS your pharmacy ready for a spate of winter accidents?

New Zealand's Accident Compensation Commission has released a list of the most common claims received during the cooler months, and it clearly pays to be prepared.

While a majority of sports-related incidents naturally occurred during snow activities such as skiing and snowboarding, there were also a number of injuries - mostly muscle strains and sprains - incurred during the somewhat gentler physical activity of curling.

Slipping on ice and chopping firewood also caused a large number of claims, while burns from heaters or fireplaces were prominent, including one claim for a patient who "fell against a hot fireplace flue while dancing".

Other non-sporting injuries included a spate of "scarf-related" incidents, including one where a scarf got caught on a piercing causing a nasty skin rip.

THE Black Death wasn't all bad, according to an English historian who says the plague which killed more than 1.5 million Britons in the 1300s actually caused a big increase in living standards.

In the years following the plague the huge population decline actually led to the creation of pubs, as peasants had increased leisure time and more money because there were fewer people competing for work and food, says Professor Robert Tombs from Cambridge University.

"This was a good time to be alive," he told attendees at the Chalke Valley History Festival in Wiltshire last week.

"This was when the English pub was invented and people started drinking beer and playing football and so on," he said.

WIN WITH AROMABABY

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and *Aromababy* are giving away a gift pack each day, including Bath Gel, Pure Hair Cleanse, Nappy Cream and natural healer Barrier Balm, valued at \$50.

Celebrating 20 years, Aromababy is Australia's first natural and organic baby skincare brand to use research as a guide in providing effective and safe formulations. Used in select hospitals and suitable for eczema and sensitive skin, Aromababy is well known as an affordable, pharmacy-focused alternative to mass produced baby care.



To win be the first from **TAS** or **VIC** to send the correct answer to the following question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Is Aromababy used in select hospitals?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Michelle Clark from Symbion.

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