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APP 2015 on location

PHARMACY Daily is on location at APP 2015.

Come and say hi to the team, editor Alex Walls and sales and marketing executive Magda Herdzik, and keep an eye on our Twitter feed for live Tweeting via our @pharmacydaily handle.

This morning kicks off with the Pharmacy Professional Programs panel, featuring US National Community Pharmacists Association ceo Doug Hoey and Pharmacy Guild of NZ president Ken Orr.

Sigma hails pharmacy

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals honoured some of Australia's top pharmacies at the Sigma Retail Gala Awards ceremony held earlier this week on the Gold Coast - see page four of today's PD for details.

Minister backs services

GREATER use of the training and skills of pharmacists "makes sense in every way", according to Federal Minister for Health Sussan Ley.

In her keynote speech at APP yesterday, Ley said the government knew, "and numerous reports have stated," that greater use of the training and skills of pharmacists and other allied health professionals is sensible and logical.

The Minister said recognition that pharmacy had evolved significantly beyond dispensing into health service delivery had been encouraged and supported since the first Community Pharmacy Agreement (CPA).

Pharmacists could not and would not replace doctors, she said, "but as allied health professionals you can fill gaps and provide quality services which do not need the additional expertise of a doctor."

These services included providing information and advice for managing asthma and other chronic diseases, supporting follow up and issues with other healthcare professionals, including after discharge from hospital, and providing outreach services to staff and residents in aged care facilities or in patients' homes, Ley said.

"Continuing to tap into your skills with evidence based programs could make our health system more cost effective and efficient."

To continue to deliver the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Medicare in line with their underlying principles of universal access, value for money needed to be considered in all parts

of the system, Ley said.

"I wish I could say to you today that pharmacy and the PBS more broadly are exempt from this process, but that is not possible."

When it came to the Sixth CPA, the Minister said she was listening and prepared to negotiate, but could not ignore the facts of the budget environment.

In her 6CPA discussions (PD 16 Feb) the Minister said she was encouraged by the increasing capacity and willingness of pharmacists to take on greater engagement in the health system, with many seeking an expanded role as healthcare clinicians, helping to get optimum results from medication use, and she had heard that consumers wanted choice in how they accessed medicines and professional services.

"My objective in the 6CPA is to renew and reinforce the strong partnership between the government...and the community pharmacists who provide such important services for Australians' health," she concluded.

Guild: wound care and more into 6CPA

PHARMACY Guild national president George Tambassis has revealed plans for the inclusion of more services such as wound care into the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Speaking at APP yesterday, Tambassis said opportunities in the 6CPA included expanding the minor ailment scheme, using professional protocols to treat people with, for instance, minor ear infections.

The Guild would propose access to short term antibiotics within appropriate guidelines in the 6CPA, he confirmed.

Executive director David Quilty said in the 6CPA, dispensary remuneration must be maintained at "at least at the average of the last agreement in real terms".

The Guild would not agree to anything until it could guarantee the viability of the community pharmacy sector through to 2020, he promised.

PSA on homeopathy

THE PSA supports the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) determination that there was no good quality evidence to show homeopathy worked better than placebo (PD 12 Mar), national president Grant Kardachi has said.

The PSA code of ethics talked about evidence-based products and making the right choice for the consumer, he said.

"I think pharmacists need to work with consumers to allow them to make an informed choice based on the available evidence."

The AMA's Dr Brian Morton has said treatments without an evidence base that wasted money needed to be removed from pharmacy shelves, while health funds have also been urged to cut reimbursements for homeopathy in the wake of the NHMRC report.



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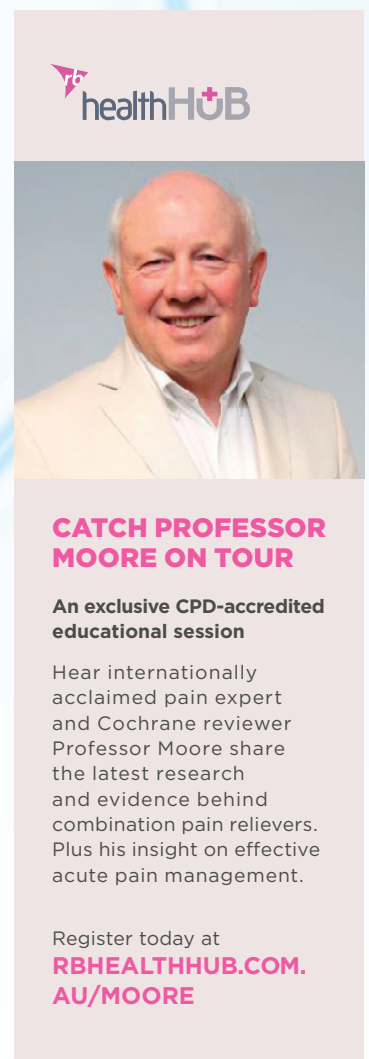


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Six PBS listings a year

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme should have more listings each year for generic entries once originators lose their patent, the Generic Medicines Industry Association (GMiA) has said.

Speaking at APP, chair Mark Crotty said listings should occur more often, such as six or 12 times a year.

If products missed one of the listing deadlines, it was three and a half months until generic competition entered the market and the GMiA was currently in discussions with government about this issue, Crotty said.

He also called for a clear pathway to boost uptake of biosimilars, products which could provide savings to government.

The GMiA was in discussions with government about a range of mechanisms that would support uptake of biosimilars to provide a competitive market, the association's ceo Belinda Wood said.

Other GMiA asks include policies encouraging use of generics and biosimilars which increase the substitution rate to off-patent medicines in Australia from the current 63% to more than 80%.

PATY nominations

NOMINATIONS have opened for the 2015 Pharmacy Assistant of the Year Award.

Conducted by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia in conjunction with GuildSuper, the national winner will receive a \$5,000 cash prize plus a Guild Training course worth \$5,100.

For details of nomination criteria see www.pharmacyassistants.com.

PBS authorities to go online

PBS authority approvals may be further streamlined, with the Department of Human Services (DHS) believed to be evaluating the development of two internet-based options to improve the process.

Currently prescribers are required to request approval in writing or over the phone for authority prescriptions, with *Pulse IT* reporting on a letter from DHS confirming the potential use of its Health Professionals Online Services website as a web-based

option to speed things up.

The Australian Medical Association has complained about the current system which is seen as "unnecessary red tape" for busy doctors who often have lengthy phone waits in order to request authority scripts.

According to the report, as well as the website option, authorities could also be obtained via a system which would work through prescribing software.

"The proposed solutions would provide an online route for approved subscribers to obtain authority approvals for the majority of general authority items, and possibly for increased quantities and repeats," the letter said.

Existing arrangements would continue for "complex and restricted medications".

The Department has set out a timeline which would see the new system introduced later this year or early in 2016.

Industry more productive

THE Australian pharmaceutical industry is more productive now than it has been for some time, Medicines Australia chair Dr Martin Cross told attendees at APP on the Gold Coast yesterday.

More than 12,300 products from major companies were currently in development, up 8.8% from last year, and the five largest Medicines Australia members had more than 1,000 in development, he said.

However, Cross said access to new medicines was declining, with Australia 18th out of 20 OECD countries when it came to proportions of new medicines reimbursed per country over those registered from 2009 to 2014.

Anyone saying the PBS was not sustainable was "not doing their homework properly", he said, with Medicines Australia calling for no further changes to the Scheme and recognition of medicines' benefits beyond cost-effectiveness,

Hep C rural tension

RESTRICTIONS on access to hepatitis C medicines creates a tension for people in rural and regional areas, the Standing Committee on Health has heard.

In a public hearing for the inquiry into hepatitis C in Australia, National Drug Research Institute research fellow Dr Susan Carruthers said devolving hepatitis C treatments to GPs was not possible due to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) rules which state the medications can only be prescribed to patients of a tertiary liver clinic.

As Schedule 100 drugs, hepatitis C medications can only be dispensed from pharmacies and pharmacy departments in private and public hospitals (*PD* 29 Jan).

"You cannot go down to your local pharmacy with a script and get them," Carruthers said.

The Committee has previously heard that pharmacy could potentially coordinate care for hepatitis C patients with methadone programs (*PD* 27 Jan).

Roll out of PCEHR 'stuck' - FRED

THE roll out of the personally controlled electronic health record (PCEHR) has stalled, Fred IT Group ceo Paul Naismith said yesterday at APP on the Gold Coast.

A report into the long-running implementation saga had been with the government for quite a while and "we await the outcome," Naismith said.

This controversial report made 38 recommendations to address shortcomings of the system and was presented in May last year.

"When there's no direction, it's very hard to encourage people to sign up to something," he said.

Naismith said personal health records should go the way of airline tickets and move online, with the electronic form as the legal entity.

"You would never consider when you went to the airport that you couldn't quickly bring up your history and reprint it if you can't find it," he said.

"Now today when you can't find your scripts, you have to go back to the doctor."

He also downplayed some of the

findings in the Australian National Audit Office report on the audit of the administration of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (*PD* 09 Mar), saying it had looked at a certain point in time.

The report found that in the first three years of the Fifth CPA some 80% of Electronic Prescription Fee payments were not paid to pharmacies but were instead used to fund other activities, including a Guild awareness campaign.

However the electronic prescription program had been "hugely successful," and the Guild's campaign had contributed to this, Naismith said.

The vendors and the different exchange operators had worked with the Department to undo roadblocks over the five years and that meant at times "changing the rules", he said, including providing incentives to join the two exchanges and to pharmacists.

"It's all the same money, but they just used it in different ways to achieve the change that was required."



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Endo trumps Valeant

ENDO International has made a takeover bid for Salix Pharmaceuticals, outbidding Valeant's \$10 billion offer by 11%. The offer is US\$175 per share in cash and stock, trumping Valeant's offer of US\$158 which is subject to a \$356 million "break fee". Salix said it would review the "unsolicited offer," while Valeant said it was "formally committed to our all-cash agreed transaction which delivers immediate and certain value to Salix shareholders".

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.

- 12-15 Mar:** Pharmacy Guild of Australia Annual National Conference APP 2015, Gold Coast - see www.appconference.com
- 15 Mar:** Bridging the Gap Workshop; St Leonards; more details at: www.psa.org.au
- 21-22 Mar:** Mental Health First Aid; Parramatta; for more details visit: www.psa.org.au
- 28-29 Mar:** Paediatric Seminar; Adelaide; see: www.cpd.shpa.org.au
- 31 Mar:** Cardiovascular Update: Atrial Fibrillation and Anticoagulants; St Leonards; more at: www.guild.org.au
- 7 Apr:** Pharmacy Live webinar; details at: www.psa.org.au
- 18-19 Apr:** Victorian Pharmacy Conference; Monash University, Parkville; visit www.psa.org.au/conferences
- 21 Apr:** Instigo and PKF Lawler Retail & Business Improvement Master Class; Newcastle; click here for tickets and further details: www.proticket.com.au

WA pharmacy takes out PotY



KIMBERLEY Pharmacy Services (KPS) in Broome, Western Australia, took out the QCPP Pharmacy of the Year, announced at APP 2015 (PD breaking news yesterday).

Accepting the award from Minister for Health Sussan Ley, owner pharmacist Hannah Mann (pictured left with Ley, and Pharmacy Guild national president George Tambassis) said the pharmacy provided a range of services including a variety of dose administration aids so patients had choice and culturally appropriate medication education.

Kimberley had a population of about 40,000, with 43% being indigenous, Mann said.

She said there were services that pharmacy could provide that had a positive impact on patients' health which she would like to see protected and funded.

Pfizer safety recall

THE TGA has advised of a recall of several Pfizer products including Xanax, Dostinex, Cabaser, Ponstan, Halcion and Methoblastin because they have not been supplied in child-resistant packaging.

Consumers are being advised to return affected products to their pharmacy so caps or bottles can be replaced with child-resistant versions.

Chosen from six finalists, KPS also won the Excellence in Community Engagement category, while Moodie's Pharmacy, Bathurst, NSW, won the Innovation in Professional Services category and Priceline Pharmacy, Bourke St Mall, Melbourne, VIC won for Excellence in Business Management.

The Minister commended the finalists for showing the passion and difference in community pharmacy and said Mann could be a "secret weapon" for the Guild when it came to Community Pharmacy Agreement negotiations.

The overall and category winners will share a cash prize.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A WIDE range of illicit drugs - including ecstasy and ketamine - became legal briefly in Ireland this week due to a legislative hiccup.

A man being prosecuted for possession of methylethcathinone brought a legal challenge, saying the way the items had been added to the controlled drugs list was unconstitutional.

After technical argument in the Court of Appeal the challenge was upheld, meaning that more than 100 drugs on the list suddenly became legal.

This resulted in emergency legislation being passed by the country's lower house of parliament, before being ratified by the Senate and signed into law by President Michael Higgins.

The rush process took about 36 hours, and potentially opened a can of worms because it could affect previous criminal prosecutions conducted under the former legislation which had been in place for almost 40 years.

Other illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine and cannabis were not affected by the glitch because they are banned by other laws.

Win with DESIGNER BRANDS



This week *Pharmacy Daily* and *Designer Brands* are giving readers a prize pack containing a new look Mineral Eye Shadow, Beyond Amplifying Mascara and two Kohl Pencils*.



*Shade will be chosen at random

Eyes are often the focal point of make-up and Designer Brands' All About Eyes promo celebrates their hottest selling on-trend eye products, a must for every makeup lover. Designer Brands' Beyond Amplifying Mascara has a new formulation with Argan Oil and Lash Food Complex, the company says. The prize pack also includes new look Mineral Eye Shadow, and two Kohl Eye Pencils.

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

Is the range paraben free?

Need a hint? [Click here.](#)

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Sandra White from Iron Pharmacy Group.



Sigma Awards Gala Honours Top Australian Pharmacies

Some of the country's top pharmacies have been recently honoured at the Sigma Retail Gala Awards held Wednesday night on the Gold Coast.

The big winners of the night included the Urunga Amcal Pharmacy in New South Wales which took out 'Amcal Pharmacy of the Year', Dapto Amcal Max in Wollongong which won 'Amcal Max Pharmacy of the Year', and The Circle Pharmacy in Altona North in Victoria which was named Guardian Pharmacy of the Year.

"Pharmacies play an integral role in providing health solutions in our community. That is why we take the time and effort to support the pharmacy and pharmacy staff, but to also recognise their contributions to the brands and communities in which they serve" said Gary Dunne, Sigma's Chief Operating Officer.

"Pharmacists are amongst the most trusted professionals, so we are particularly pleased to be able to recognise their achievements at this year's Retail Gala Awards night."

Other winners on the night included:

- **Community Amcal Pharmacy (WA)** - Amcal/Amcal Max Community Engagement Pharmacy of the Year
- **Gayndah Guardian Pharmacy (QLD)** - Guardian Community Engagement Pharmacy of the Year
- **Portland Amcal Pharmacy (VIC)** - Professional Services Award (Inaugural)
- **Vicki Heyward** - Amcal Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (Deloraine Amcal, TAS)
- **Michelle Jeffery** - Amcal Max Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (Amcal Max Salamander Bay, NSW)
- **Lee Caddick** - Guardian Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (Portland Guardian, VIC)
- **Janine Kerr** - Amcal Retail Manager of the Year (Noosville Amcal, QLD)
- **Ashlee Galea** - Guardian Retail Manager of the Year (Guardian Night & Day Pharmacy, Bayswater WA)
- **Sarah Burton** - Amcal Max Store Business Manager of the Year (Amcal Max Dapto, NSW)
- **Travis Bailey** - Pharmacist Business Leader of the Year (Centrepoint Amcal, WA)

The awards were part of the 3-day Amcal and Guardian Retail Conference which offered up a mix of professional and industry speakers, retail workshops, plenary sessions, and supplier exhibits.

Guardian ambassador **Dr Cindy Pan** and Beauty ambassador **Rachael Finch** were also in attendance.



The Circle Guardian Pharmacy (Vic) Pharmacy of the Year 2014 (Guardian)



Community Amcal Pharmacy (WA) Community Engagement Pharmacy of the Year 2014



Amcal Max Dapto (NSW) Pharmacy of the Year 2014 (Amcal Max)



Urunga Amcal Pharmacy (NSW) Pharmacy of the Year 2014 (Amcal)